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Mahabharata-37

KARNA IN COMMAND



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MAHABHARATA

Veda Vyasa's Epic on the Bharata race was first recited in public by his disciple Vaishampayana at the behest of the ageless seer Vyasa Himself.

The recital took place in the august presence of King Janamejaya—great grandson of Vyasa—and the many learned sages who had assembled for Janamejaya's Sarpa Satra (a 12-year-long snake-sacrifice).

In the thirty-sixth volume of our rendering of the Mahabharata, we saw how the Kaurava forces were demoralised by the onslaught of Arjuna and thrown into disarray. On the fourteenth day the armies did not, contrary to the practice, stop fighting at sunset but continued the battle at night by torch-light. With his troop of rakshasas, Ghatotkacha, Bheema's son, used the darkness to advantage to torment the Kauravas. To destroy him, Karna was compelled to use the celestial weapon Shakti which he had reserved for Arjuna. Meanwhile, Drona was tricked into believing that his beloved Ashwatthama had been killed. Losing his will to live he laid down arms and fell an easy victim to the attack of Dhrishtadyumna.



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Ramayana Quiz Contest

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As soon as the matter is cleared, the needful will be done.

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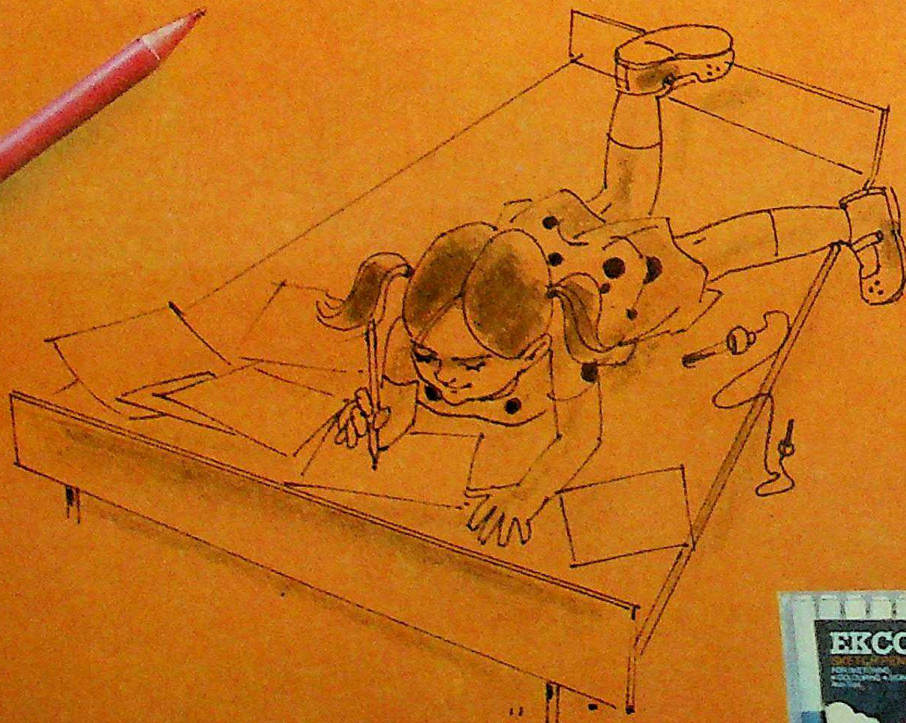
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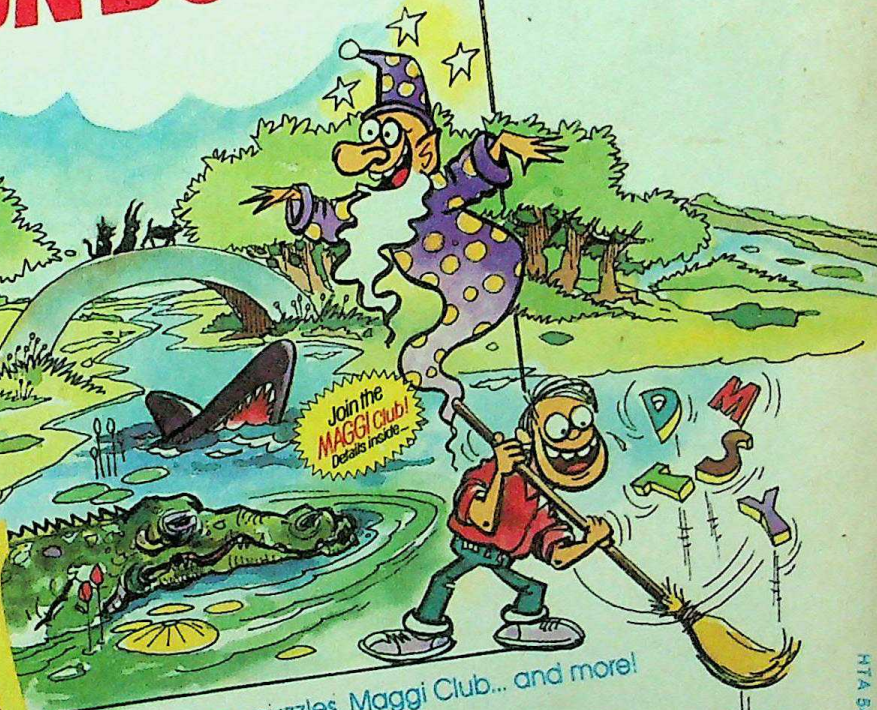
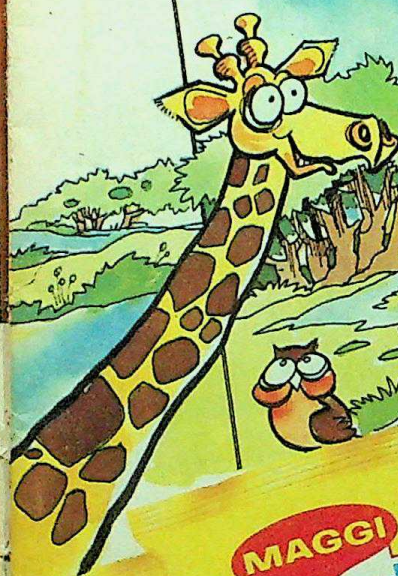
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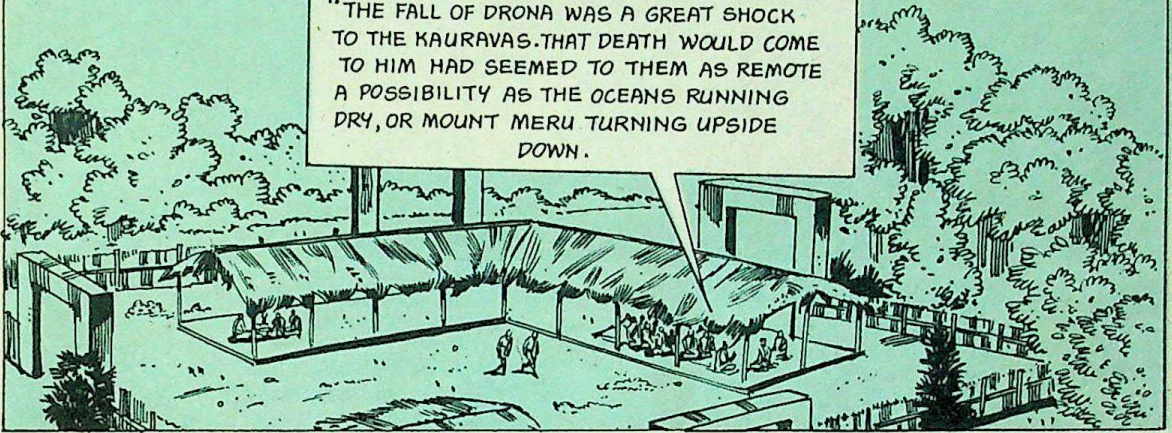


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Mahabharata - 37

KARNA IN COMMAND

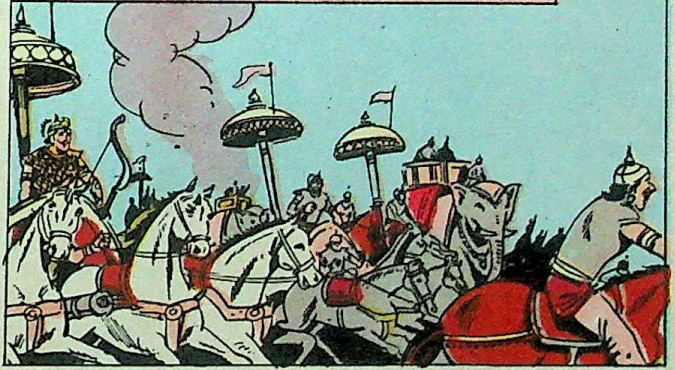
"THE FALL OF DRONA WAS A GREAT SHOCK TO THE KAURAVAS. THAT DEATH WOULD COME TO HIM HAD SEEMED TO THEM AS REMOTE A POSSIBILITY AS THE OCEANS RUNNING DRY, OR MOUNT MERU TURNING UPSIDE DOWN."



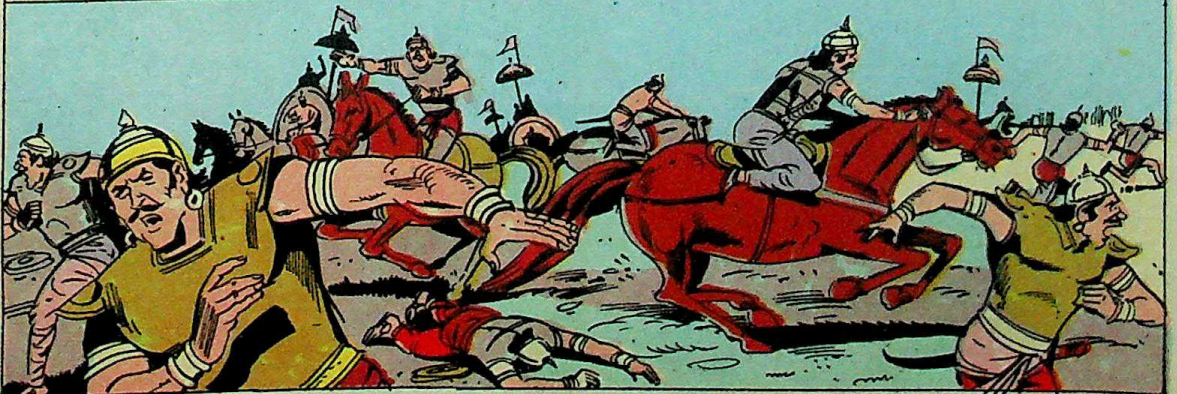
"IN FEAR AND PANIC, THE KAURAVA SOLDIERS BEGAN TO RETREAT."



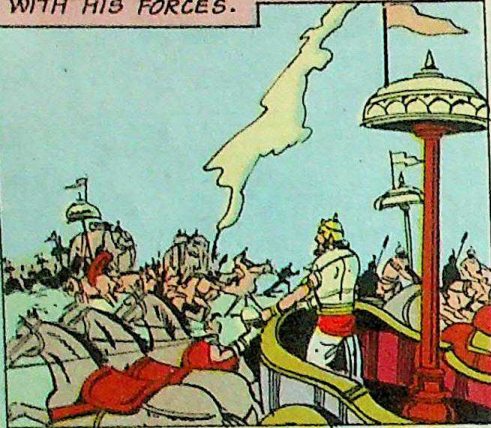
"EVEN WARRIORS LIKE KARNA, SHALYA AND KRIPACHARYA FLED FROM THE BATTLEFIELD."



"WHILE SOME SOLDIERS DISCARDED THEIR ARMOUR AS THEY RAN, OTHERS JUMPED ONTO THEIR HORSES TO GET AWAY FASTER."



"IN THE MIDST OF THE PANIC AND THE CONFUSION ASHWATTHAMA ADVANCED WITH HIS FORCES."



"SURPRISED TO SEE THE ARMY ON THE RUN, HE ASKED DURYODHANA —

WHY ARE THEY FLEEING?
WHY DO NOT YOU STOP
THEM?

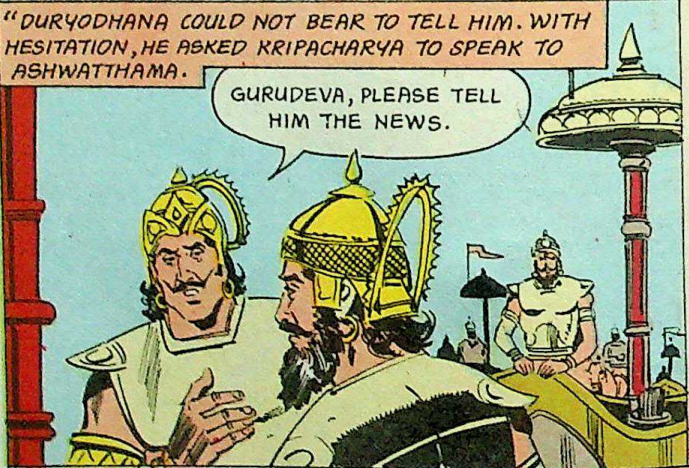


O KING! HAS
ANY LION-HEART-
ED WARRIOR
FALLEN? IS THAT
WHY THEY ARE
FILLED WITH
FEAR? TELL ME.



"DURYODHANA COULD NOT BEAR TO TELL HIM. WITH HESITATION, HE ASKED KRIPACHARYA TO SPEAK TO ASHWATTHAMA."

GURUDEVA, PLEASE TELL
HIM THE NEWS.



"IN A PAINED VOICE KRIPACHARYA RELATED THE EVENTS TO ASHWATTHAMA."

...AND SO, ON CONFIRMING
THE NEWS OF YOUR DEATH FROM
THE RIGHTEOUS YUDHISHTHIRA,
DRONA LAID DOWN HIS
WEAPONS ...

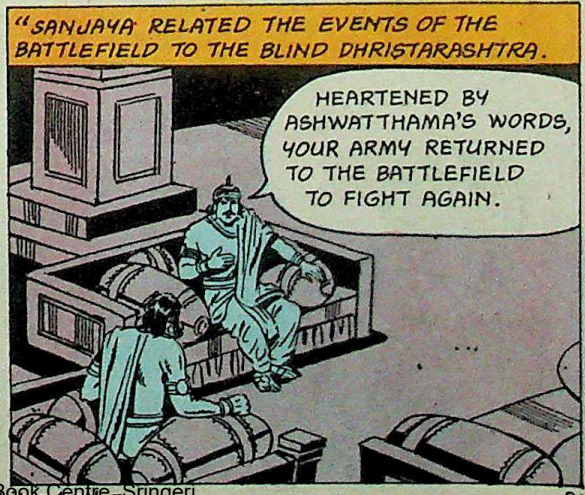
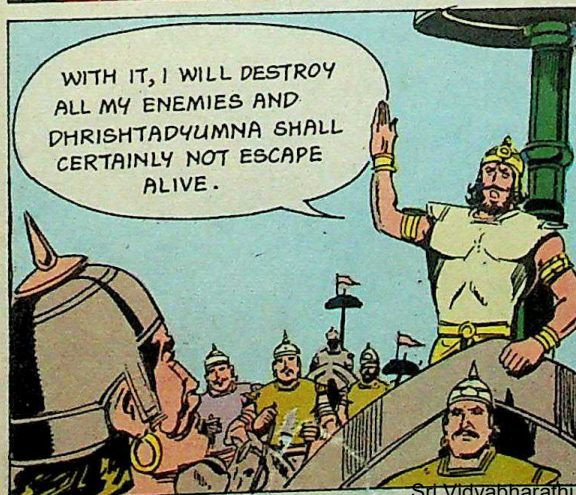
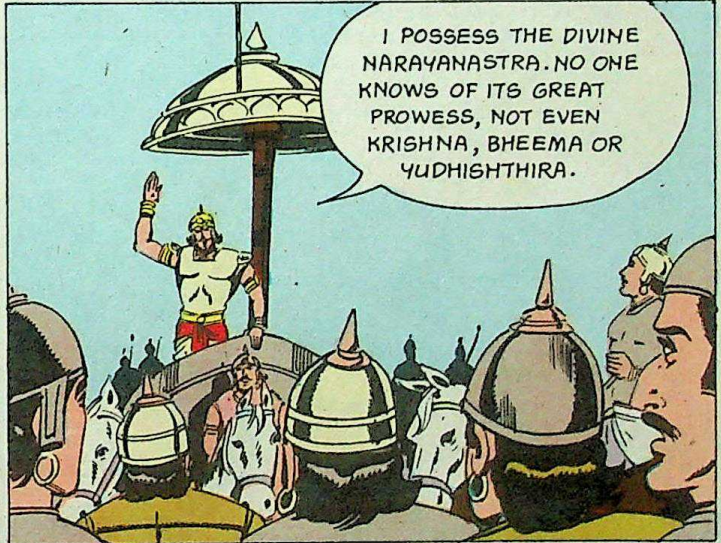
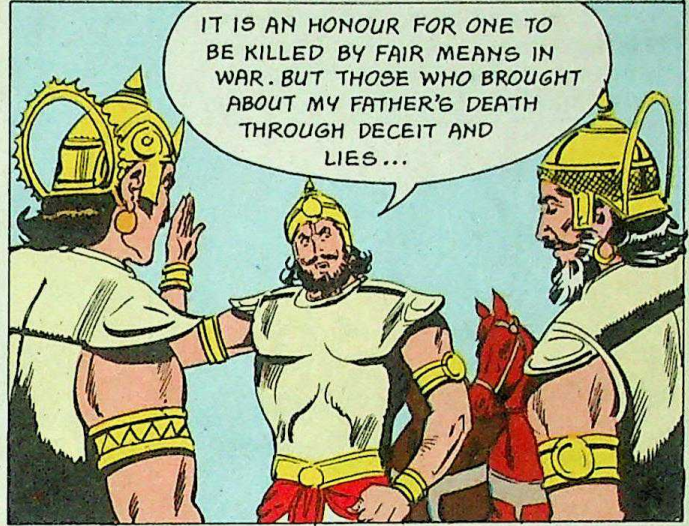
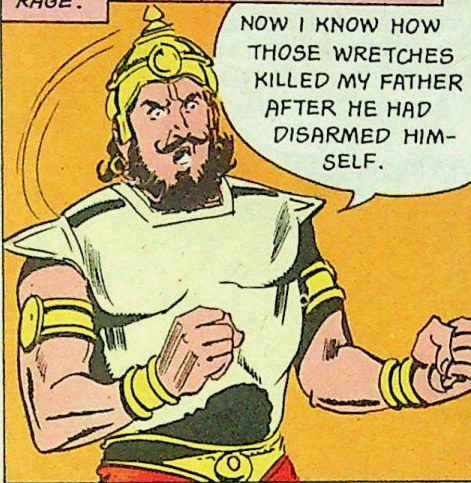


...AND DHRISTADYUMNA
SEIZED THE CHANCE TO
KILL HIM.

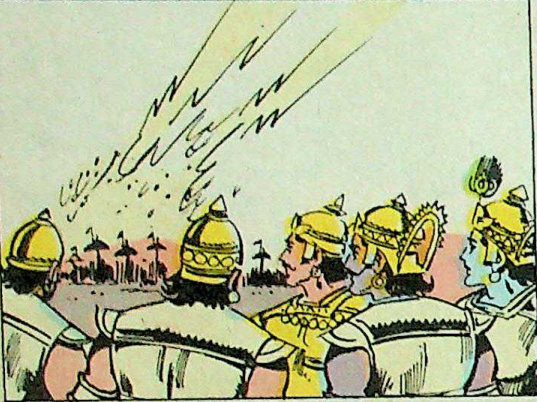


KARNA IN COMMAND

"ASHWATTHAMA WAS LIVID WITH RAGE.



"THE TUMULT OF CONCH SHELLS AND TRUMPETS HERALDING THE APPROACH OF THE KAURAVAS, INFUSED WITH ENTHUSIASM AGAIN, TOOK THE PANDAVAS BY SURPRISE.

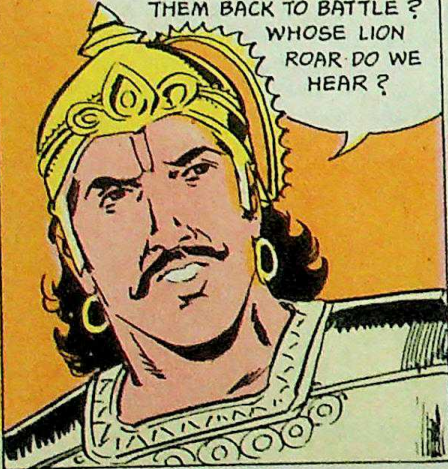


"YUDHISHTHIRA ASKED ARJUNA —

DISHEARTENED BY DRONA'S DEATH, THE KAURAVAS HAD FLED. BUT NOW THEY APPEAR TO BE RETURNING TO FIGHT.



WHO COULD BE LEADING THEM BACK TO BATTLE? WHOSE LION ROAR DO WE HEAR?



"ARJUNA RESPONDED.

SURELY THAT IS ASHWATTHAMA'S CRY AS HE COMES TO AVENGE HIS FATHER'S DEATH. WHO CAN SAVE DHRISTADYUMNA TODAY FROM THE VALOROUS ASHWATTHAMA?



YOU TOO ARE GUILTY, O KING, FOR HAVING DECEIVED DRONA WITH YOUR ONE LIE.



OH! WE MUST BE ALL GETTING OLD AND SENILE TO HAVE BEHAVED AS WE DID.



OUR GREED FOR A KINGDOM LED US TO THE THREEFOLD SIN OF KILLING DRONA WHO WAS A BRAHMANA, OUR ELDER AND OUR GURU. OH! I SHOULD DIE OF SHAME NOW.



KARNA IN COMMAND

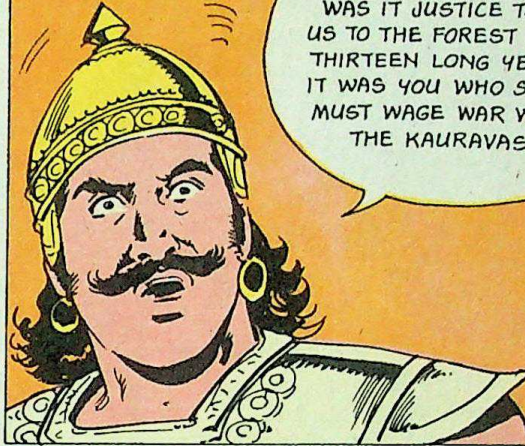
"ALL THE PANDAVAS WERE DUMBSTRUCK AT ARJUNA'S OUTBURST. THEN BHEEMA SPOKE UP.

AH! MY RIGHTEOUS BROTHER! YOU SOUND LIKE A BRAHMANA GIVING A DISCOURSE. BUT AS A TRUE-BLOODED KSHATRIYA, THESE WORDS ILL BECOME YOU.



"ANGER WAS EVIDENT IN WHAT BHEEMA SAID.

WAS NOT OUR KINGDOM SEIZED BY UNFAIR MEANS? WAS IT JUSTICE TO BANISH US TO THE FOREST FOR THIRTEEN LONG YEARS? IT WAS YOU WHO SAID WE MUST WAGE WAR WITH THE KAURAVAS.



ALL THESE YEARS, WE HELD OUR ANGER IN CHECK BECAUSE YUDHISHTHIRA INSISTED THAT WE WAIT TILL OUR EXILE WAS OVER. THE VERY SAME YUDHISHTHIRA, WHOM YOU NOW CHOOSE TO FIND FAULT WITH.



AND TO TOP IT ALL, A WARRIOR OF YOUR STATURE PRAISES ASHWATTHAMA THUS! WHY, ARMED WITH MY MACE, I CAN DEAL WITH HIM ALL BY MYSELF.

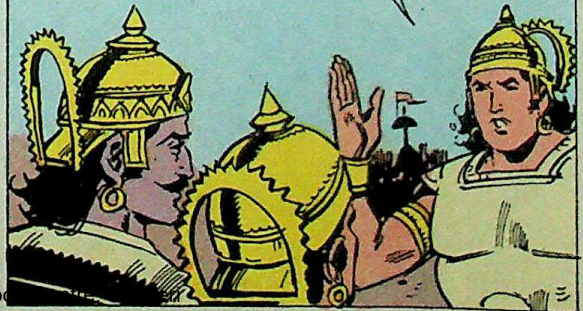


"DHRISTADYUMNA SAID —

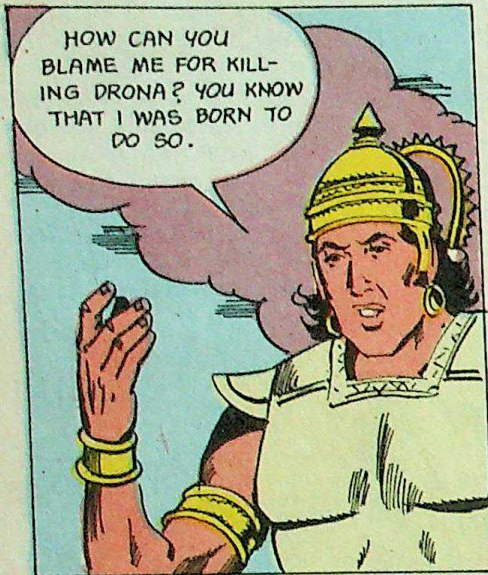
ARJUNA, YOU ARE FULL OF PRAISE FOR DRONA NOW. BUT YOU FORGET DRONA HAD FORSAKEN HIS DHARMA AS A BRAHMANA. HE PERFORMED NONE OF THE DUTIES* EXPECTED OF A BRAHMANA.



WAS IT FAIR ON HIS PART TO USE DIVINE WEAPONS ON HELPLESS SOLDIERS?



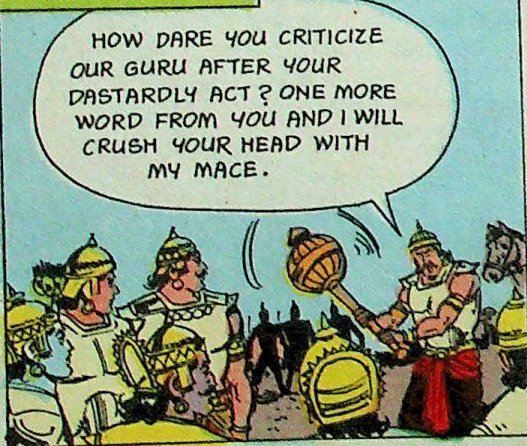
* ASSISTING IN SACRIFICES, PERFORMING SACRIFICES, GIVING AWAY GIFTS, RECEIVING GIFTS, TEACHING AND STUDYING.



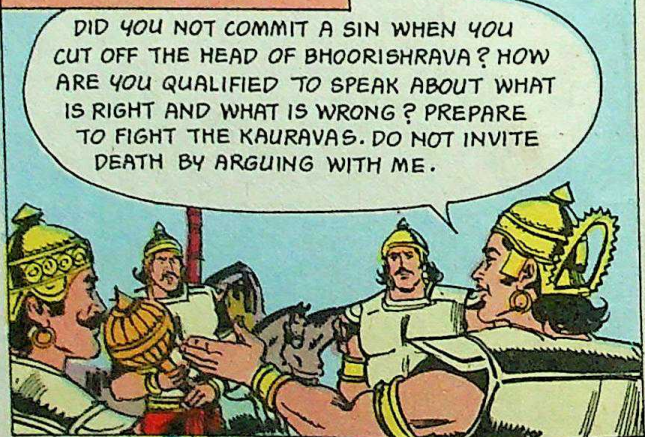
"DHRITARASHTRA, EAGERLY FOLLOWING THE NARRATION OF SANJAYA, INTERVENED.



"BRISTLING WITH RAGE, SATYAKI REBUKED DHRISHTADYUMNA.



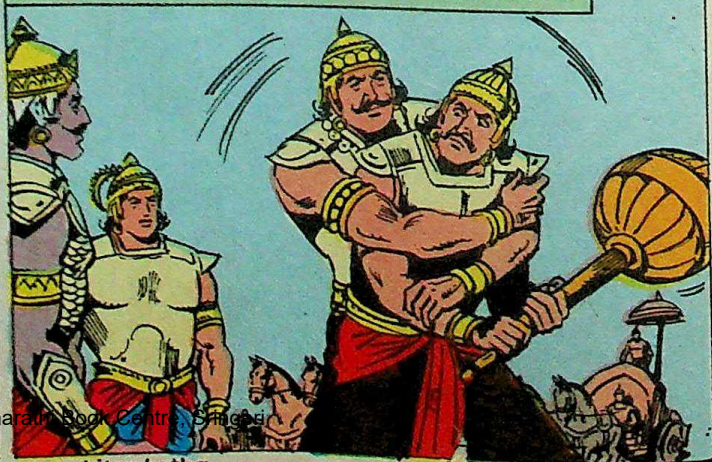
"DISMISSING SATYAKI'S THREAT WITH A LAUGH, DHRISHTADYUMNA SAID —



"SATYAKI POUNCED ON DHRISHTADYUMNA.

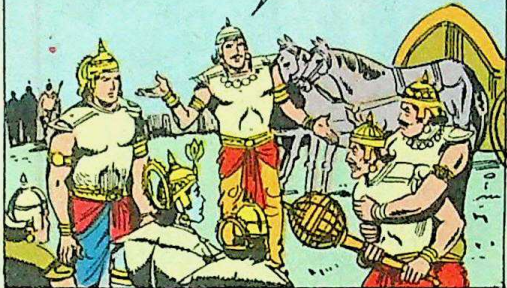


"ON KRISHNA'S BIDDING, BHEEMA INTERVENED.

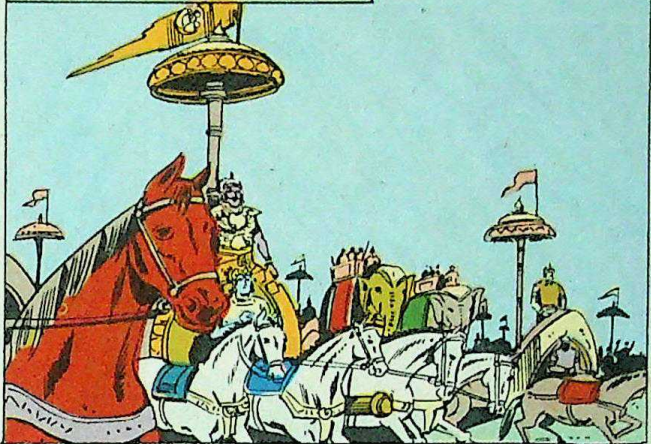


"SAHADEVA ADDRESSED THE TWO
HEROES —

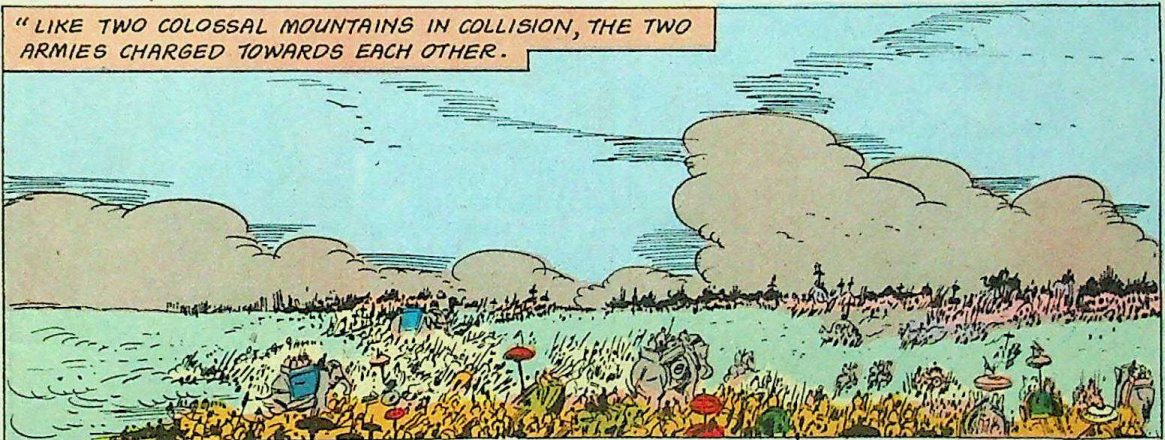
COME ! SHED
YOUR ANGER AND
FORGIVE EACH
OTHER.



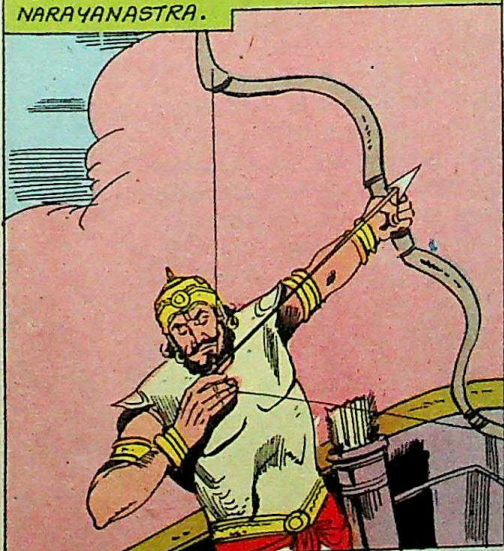
"KRISHNA AND YUDHISHTHIRA FINALLY MANAGED TO
PACIFY THE TWO AND THE PANDAVAS PREPARED TO
CONFRONT THE ENEMY AGAIN.



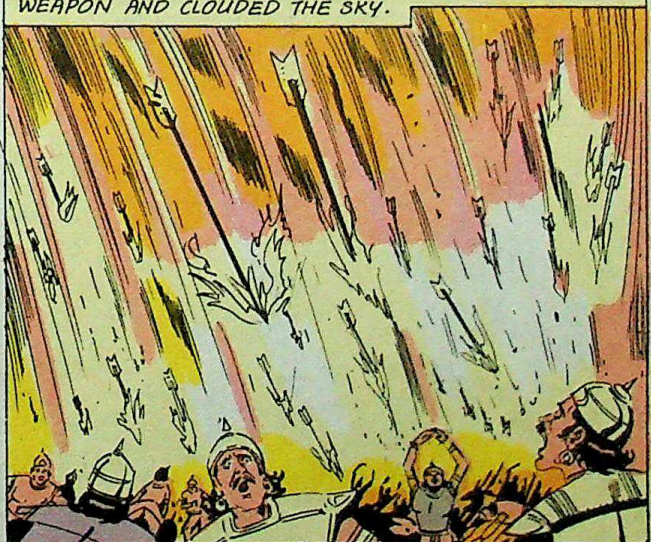
"LIKE TWO COLOSSAL MOUNTAINS IN COLLISION, THE TWO
ARMIES CHARGED TOWARDS EACH OTHER.



"JUST THEN ASHWATTHAMA INVOKED THE
NARAYANASTRA.



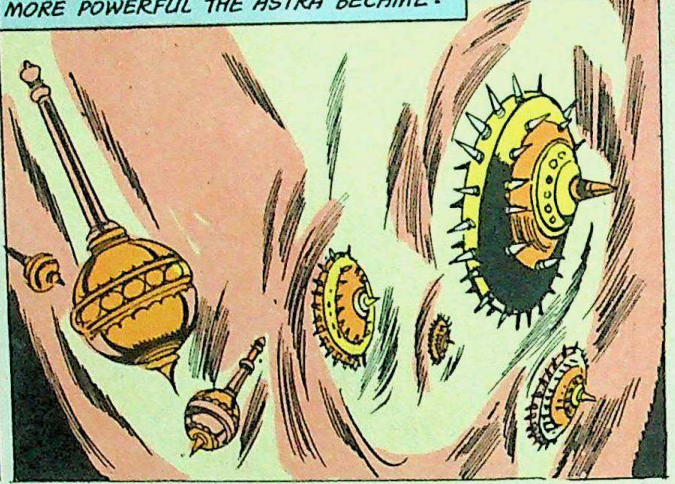
"THOUSANDS OF ARROWS SPRANG FORTH FROM THE
WEAPON AND CLOUDED THE SKY.



"EVEN AS THE ARROWS FELL ON THE PANDAVAS LIKE GLOWING SERPENTS, MANY A RADIANT DISC APPEARED IN THE SKY."



"STRANGE AND OMINOUS-LOOKING WEAPONS FOLLOWED. THE MORE THE PANDAVA FORCES OPPOSED IT, THE MORE POWERFUL THE ASTRA BECAME."

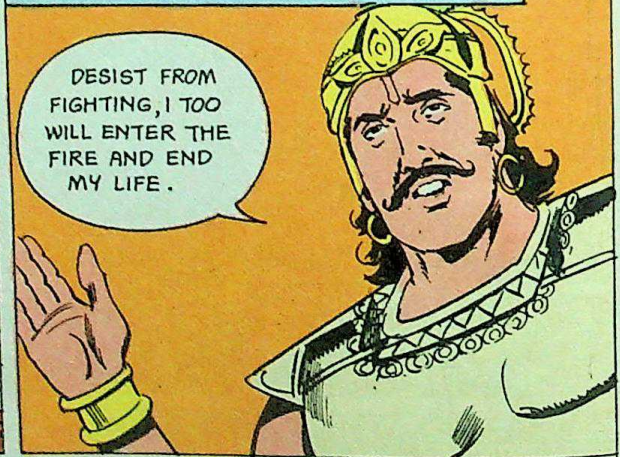


"SEEING HIS TROOPS BEING DECIMATED BY THE NARAYANASTRA, YUDHISHTHIRA SAID —



DHRISHTADYUMNA!
TAKE THE PANCHALA
ARMY AND FLEE!
SATYAKI, YOU TOO
GO HOME.

"ADDRESSING THE SOLDIERS, HE SAID —



DESIST FROM
FIGHTING, I TOO
WILL ENTER THE
FIRE AND END
MY LIFE.

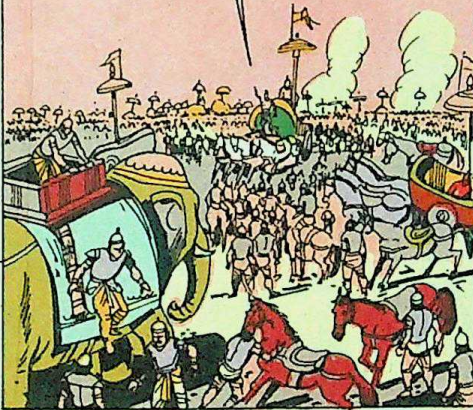
"JUST THEN, KRISHNA SIGNALLED TO THE PANDAVA FORCES."



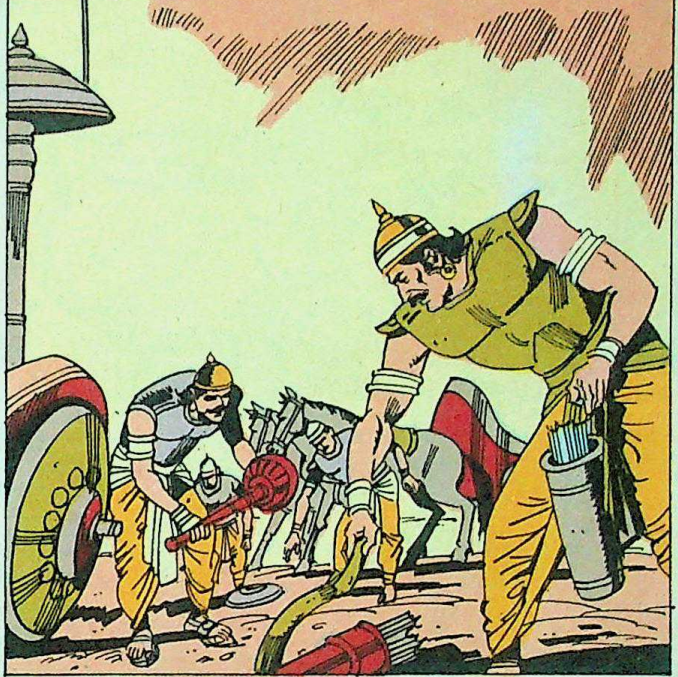
BRAVE WARRIORS, ALIGHT FROM
YOUR VEHICLES AND THROW YOUR
WEAPONS DOWN! THE ONLY WAY TO
ESCAPE THE FURY OF THIS CELESTIAL
WEAPON IS TO STAND UNARMED
ON THE GROUND.

"AS THE WARRIORS DISMOUNTED,
KRISHNA EXPLAINED—

THE MORE YOU
OPPOSE IT, THE MORE
POWERFUL THE ASTRA
WILL BECOME. YOU MUST
INSTEAD BOW BEFORE
ITS MIGHT.



"THUS DIRECTED BY KRISHNA, THE PANDAVA WARRIORS
GOT READY TO RENOUNCE THE WEAPONS AND EVEN THE
VERY THOUGHT OF THEM.

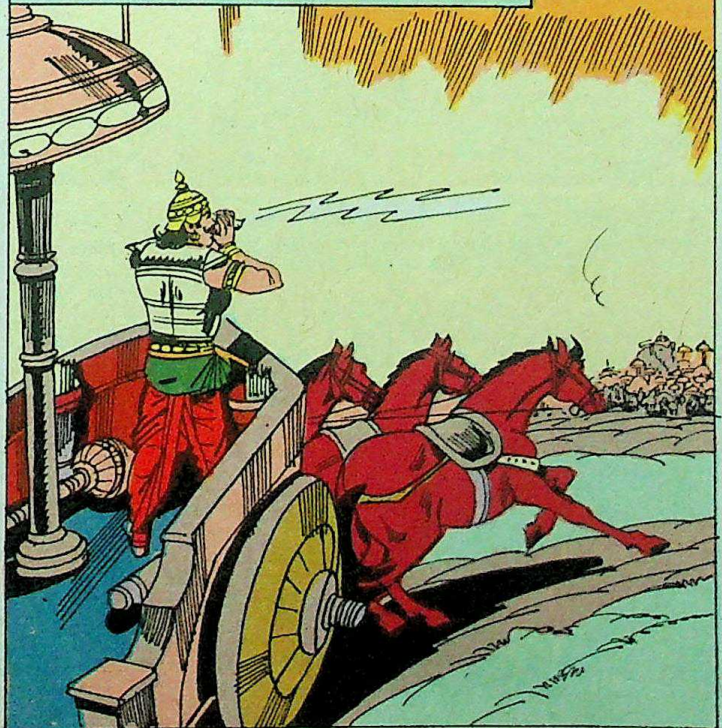


"BHEEMA ALONE WAS DEFIANT.

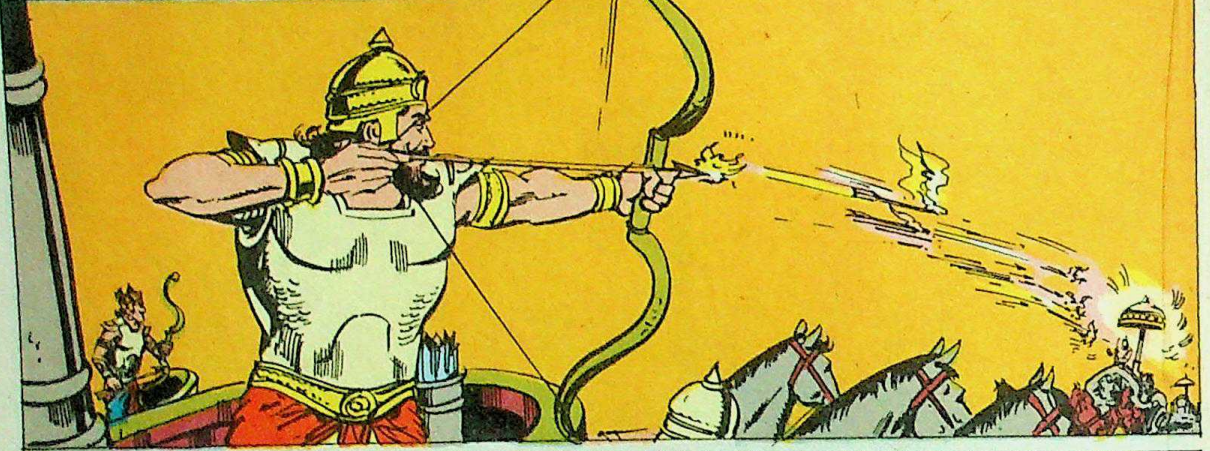
LIKE THE SUN,
I STAND UNEQUALLED.
I WILL OPPOSE THE
NARAYANASTRA
EVEN IF NO ONE
HAS DONE SO
BEFORE.



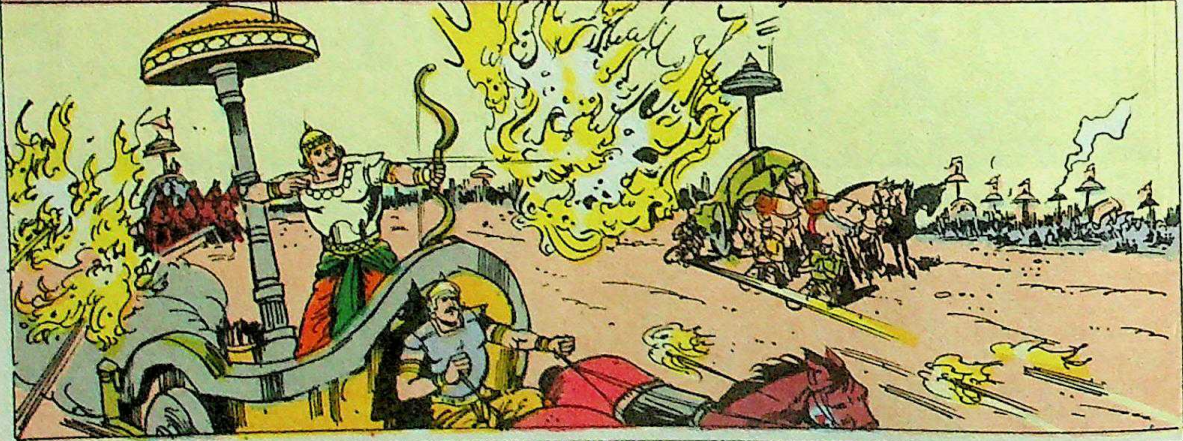
"AS HE SET FORTH ON HIS CHARIOT TOWARDS ASHWATTHAMA,
THE KAUHAVAS PELTED HIM WITH ARROWS.



"WITH A LAUGH, ASHWATTHAMA RAINED
FIRE-TIPPED ARROWS ON BHEEMA.



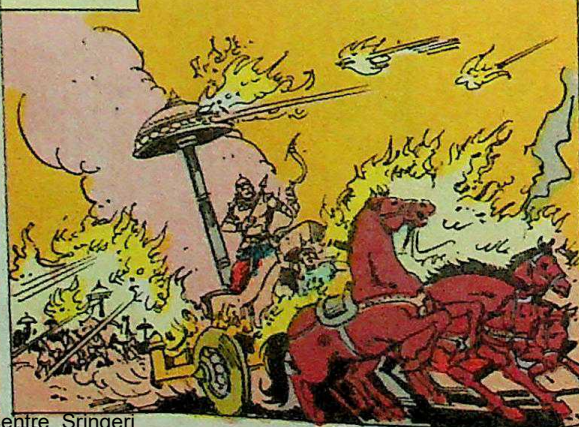
"BHEEMA RESEMBLED A MIGHTY MOUNTAIN COVERED WITH FIRE-FLIES. WHEN HE TRIED TO COUNTER
ASHWATTHAMA'S ATTACK WITH HIS OWN ARROWS, THE SPARKLES TURNED TO A FLAMING FIRE. AT
THIS THE FRIGHTENED PANDAVA SOLDIERS QUICKLY PROSTRATED THEMSELVES ON THE GROUND.



"WHEN THEY BECAME INACTIVE, THE BRUNT
OF THE NARAYANASTRA FELL ON BHEEMA.

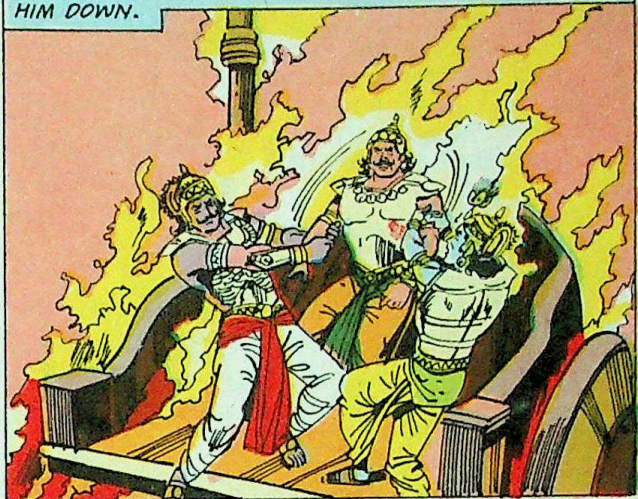
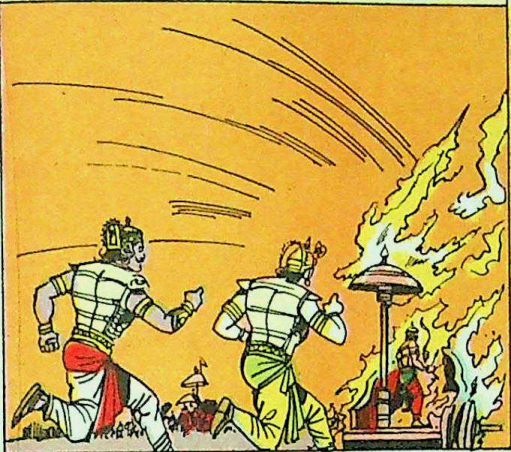


"NOW HIS CHARIOT, CHARIOTEER AND HORSES
WERE ALL ENVELOPED IN FLAMES. EVEN ARJUNA'S
VARUNASTRA* WAS INEFFECTIVE IN QUENCHING
THE FIRE.



* CELESTIAL WEAPON OF VARUNA, LORD OF THE SEA.

"KRISHNA AND ARJUNA JUMPED DOWN FROM THEIR CHARIOT AND RUSHED TOWARDS BHEEMA LEAVING THEIR ARMS BEHIND. THEY WRENCHED OFF HIS WEAPONS AND PULLED HIM DOWN."

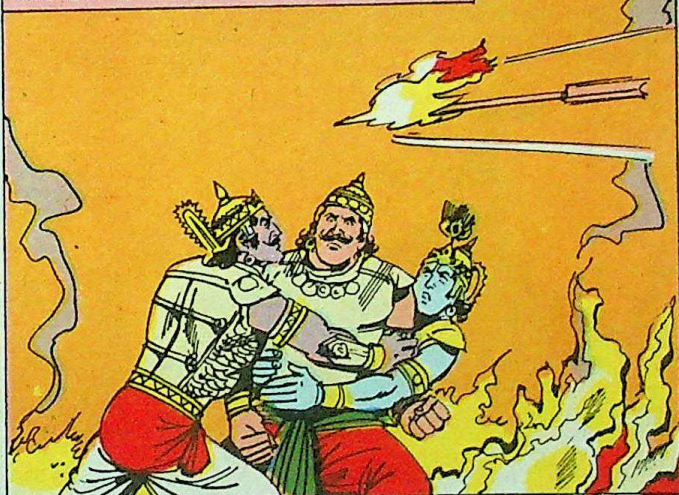


"BUT BHEEMA WAS STUBBORN. HE LET OUT A LION ROAR WHICH AGAIN AUGMENTED THE EFFECT OF THE ASTRA. KRISHNA REBUKED HIM."

WHY DO YOU NOT LISTEN, BHEEMA! STOP FIGHTING NOW.



"BOTH KRISHNA AND ARJUNA HELD BHEEMA DOWN TILL THE ASTRA PASSED OVER THEIR HEADS."



"THE AIR COOLED DOWN AND THE SOLDIERS AND ANIMALS REVIVED."



"AS THE PANDAVA FORCES PREPARED TO RESUME THE FIGHT, DURYODHANA TOLD ASHWATTHAMA —"

COME ON! SEND THAT WEAPON AGAIN. HURRY!



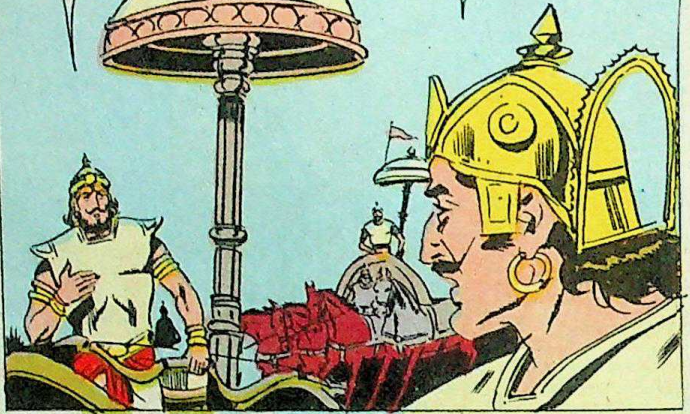
"ASHWATTHAMA REPLIED WITH A DEEP SIGH—

ALAS! NEITHER DOES THIS WEAPON RETURN NOR CAN IT BE INVOKED AGAIN. IF I TRY TO RECALL IT, IT WILL CERTAINLY DESTROY US.

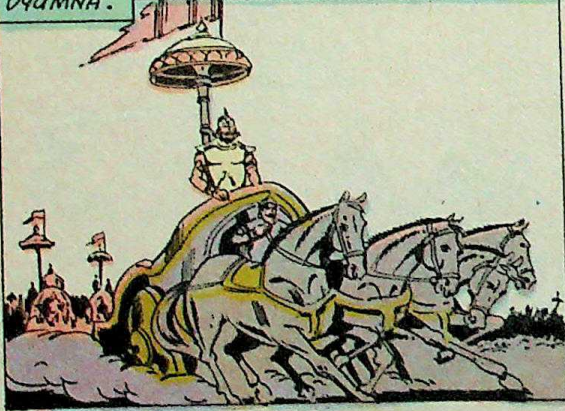


DISCLOSED THE SECRET OF QUELLING THE NARAYANA STRA, WE WOULD HAVE DESTROYED ALL OUR ENEMIES TODAY.

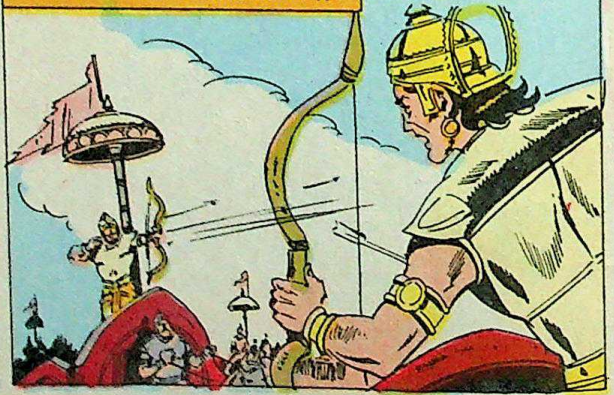
THEN USE THE OTHER CELESTIAL WEAPONS AT YOUR DISPOSAL.



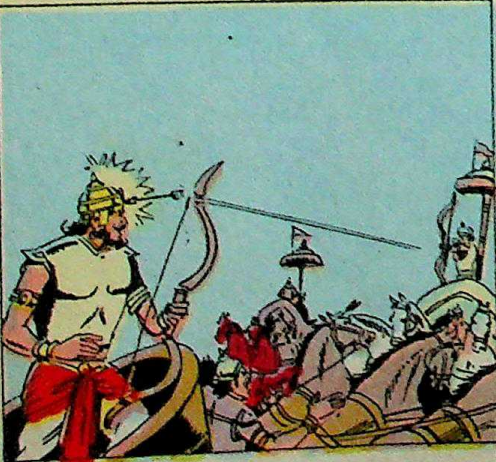
"ASHWATTHAMA SET OUT TO ATTACK DHRISHTADYUMNA.



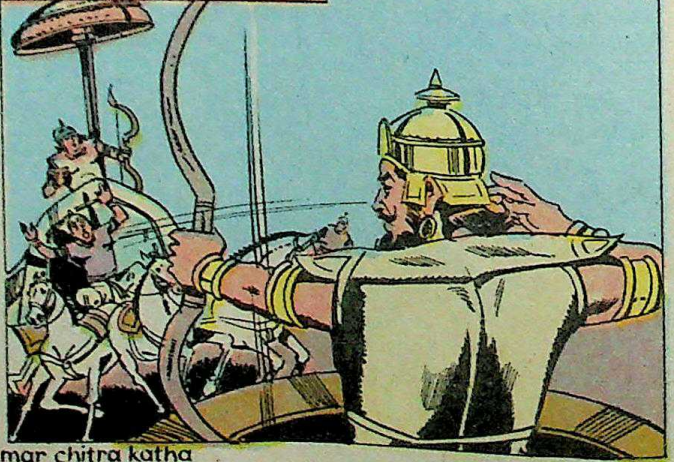
"WITH TWENTY-FIVE PIERCING ARROWS, HE WOUNDED DHRISHTADYUMNA.



"ON RECOVERING, DHRISHTADYUMNA RAINED COUNTLESS ARROWS IN RETURN.

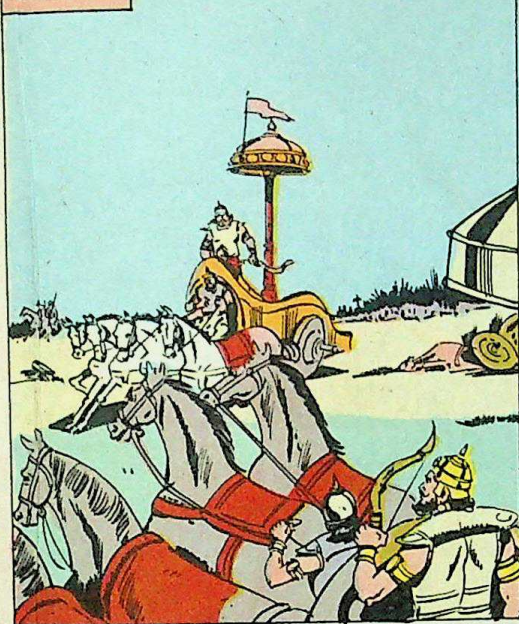


"BUT NOT FOR LONG. SOON ASHWATTHAMA KILLED HIS HORSES AND CHARIOTEER.

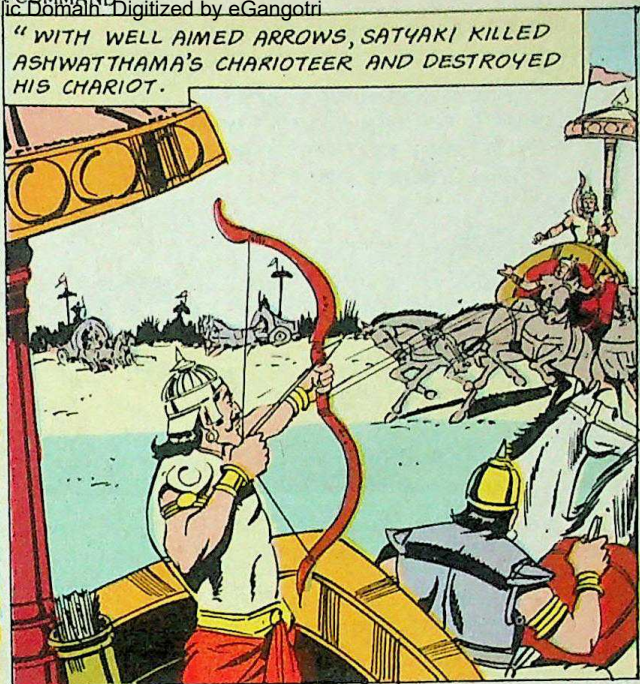


amar chitra katha

"SATYAKI THEN CAME TO DHRISHTADYUMNA'S RESCUE.



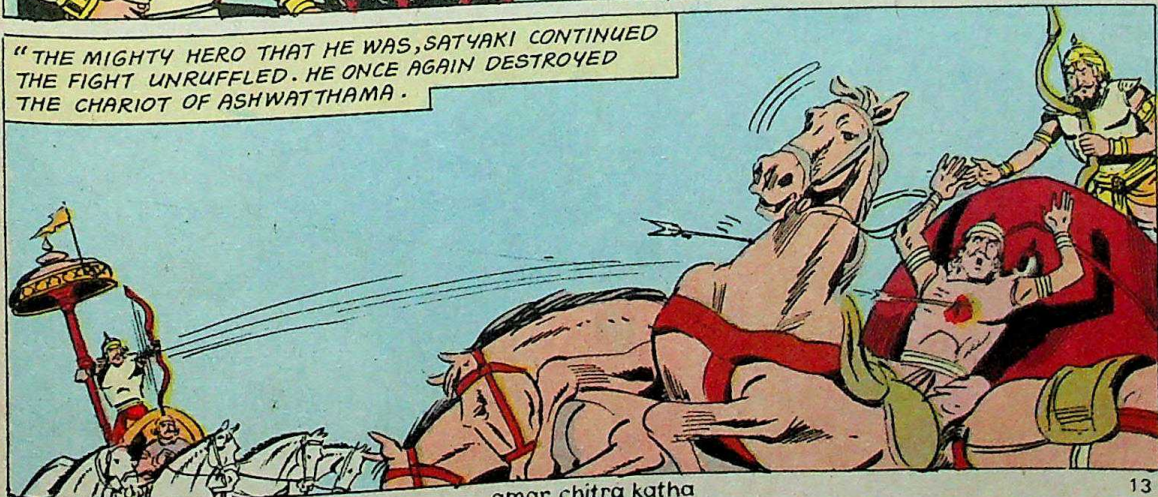
"WITH WELL AIMED ARROWS, SATYAKI KILLED ASHWATTHAMA'S CHARIOTEER AND DESTROYED HIS CHARIOT.



"WHEN DURYODHANA, KRIPA AND KARNA CAME TO HIM, ASHWATTHAMA ASCENDED ANOTHER CHARIOT.



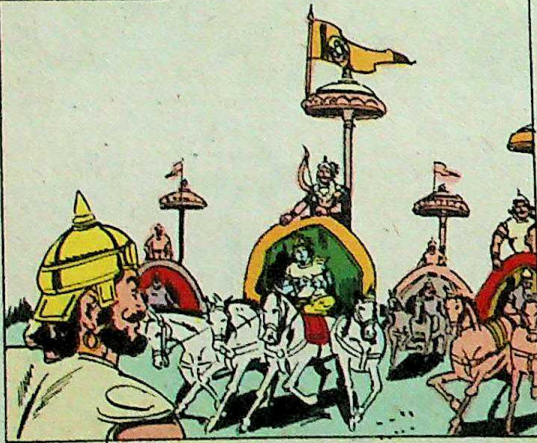
"THE MIGHTY HERO THAT HE WAS, SATYAKI CONTINUED THE FIGHT UNRUFFLED. HE ONCE AGAIN DESTROYED THE CHARIOT OF ASHWATTHAMA.



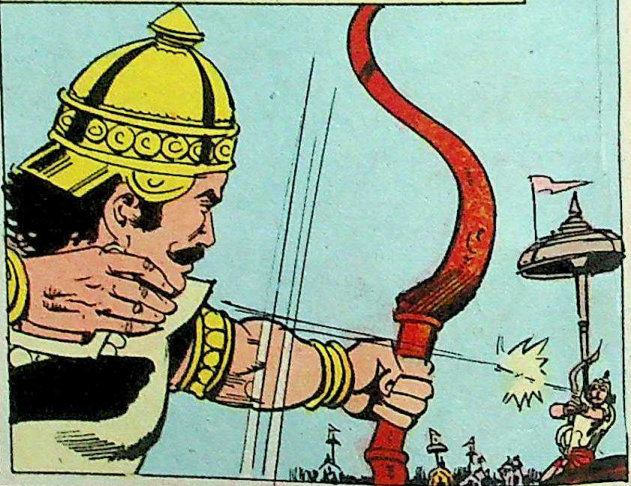
I KNOW YOU HAVE A SOFT
CORNER FOR DHRISHTADYUMNA.
BUT TODAY NEITHER OF YOU
WILL ESCAPE ME.



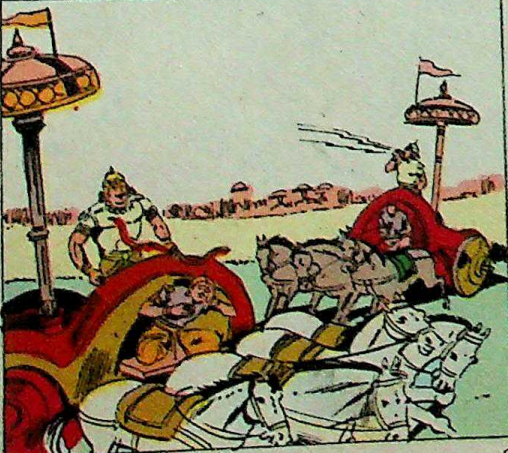
"SEEING SATYAKI BEING THUS TORMENTED,
FIVE MIGHTY PANDAVA WARRIORS CAME
TO HIS AID.



"BHEEMA AND ASHWATTHAMA WERE SOON
ENGAGED IN WELL-MATCHED BATTLE.

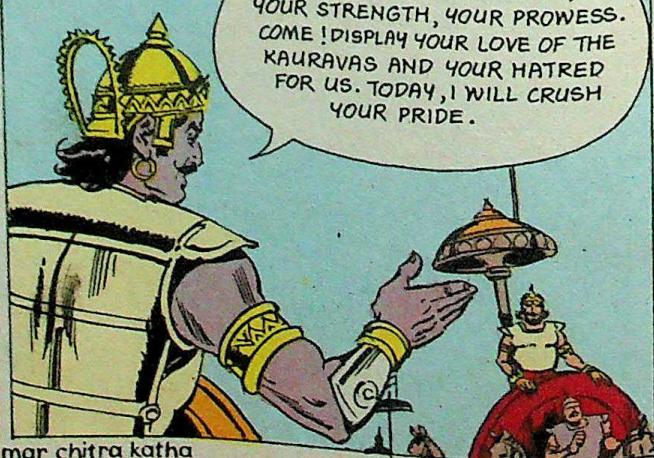


"ASHWATTHAMA INJURED BHEEMA'S
CHARIOTEER. RELEASED FROM THE REINS,
HIS HORSES TOOK BHEEMA AWAY.



"ARJUNA HAILED ASHWATTHAMA —

LET ME SEE YOUR VALOUR,
YOUR STRENGTH, YOUR PROWESS.
COME! DISPLAY YOUR LOVE OF THE
KAURAVAS AND YOUR HATRED
FOR US. TODAY, I WILL CRUSH
YOUR PRIDE.



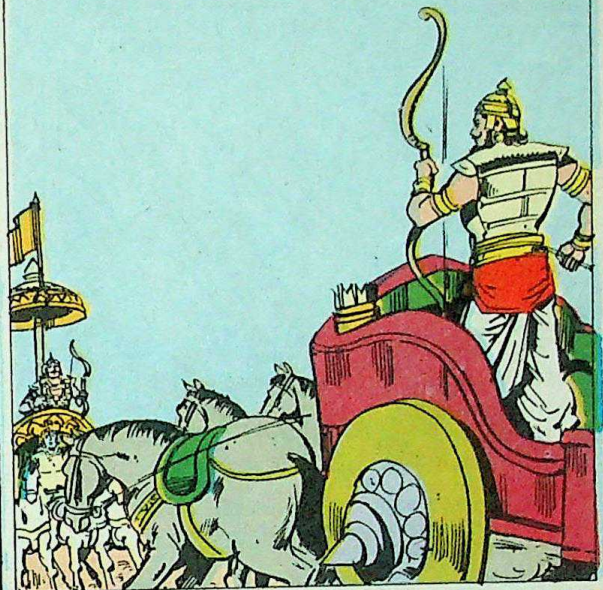
"DHRTARASHTRA WAS SURPRISED TO HEAR THIS. HE INTERRUPTED SANJAYA'S NARRATION.

BUT ARJUNA AND ASHWATTHAMA HAD ALWAYS BEEN FRIENDS. WHY WAS ARJUNA SO RUDE TO HIM ?

HE WAS DEEPLY HURT BY THE CRITICISM HURLED AT HIM, THE DEFEAT OF BHEEMA, SATYAKI AND DHRSHTADYUMNA HAD ALSO MADE HIM UNHAPPY.



"ASHWATTHAMA TOOK UP ARJUNA'S CHALLENGE.



"IMPATIENT TO KILL ARJUNA, HE INVOKED THE AGNEYASTRA *



"NO SOONER HAD THE CELESTIAL WEAPON BEEN RELEASED THAN THE SKY RAINED DOWN ARROWS AND METEORS AND FLAMES OF FIRE ONTO THE BATTLEFIELD WHICH WAS SUDDENLY PLUNGED IN DARKNESS.



"ARJUNA THEN USED THE BRAHMASTRA WHICH SUBDUES THE MOST POWERFUL WEAPONS.



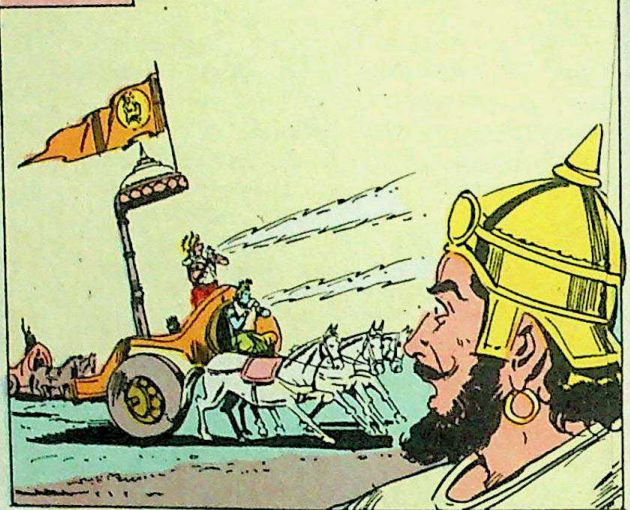
* CELESTIAL WEAPON BELONGING TO AGNI, LORD OF FIRE.

Sri Vidyabharathi Book Centre, Sringeri

"COUNTERED BY THE BRAHMASTRA, THE DARKNESS LIFTED AND THE AIR COOLED DOWN. THE DEVASTATING EFFECT OF THE AGNEYASTRA ON THE PANDAVA FORCES NOW BECAME VISIBLE.



"BUT ARJUNA AND KRISHNA ESCAPED UNSCATHED. THIS PLUNGED ASHWATTHAMA IN A GLOOM OF DESPAIR.



"THROWING AWAY HIS BOW HE JUMPED OFF HIS CHARIOT.



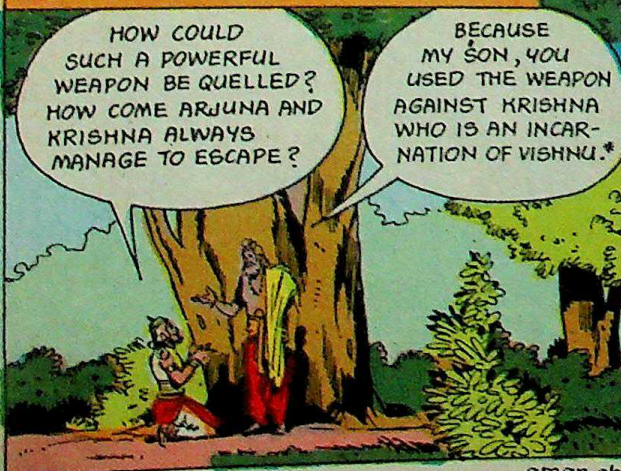
SHAME ON ME!
ALL MY EFFORTS
ARE FUTILE.

"AS HE WAS RUNNING OFF THE BATTLEFIELD FULL OF DESPAIR, HE CAME ACROSS SAGE VYASA.



OH, WISE ONE!
WHERE DID I GO
WRONG? WHY
DID THE WEAPON
FAIL ME?

"POURING OUT HIS WOE, HE CONTINUED—



HOW COULD
SUCH A POWERFUL
WEAPON BE QUELLED?
HOW COME ARJUNA AND
KRISHNA ALWAYS
MANAGE TO ESCAPE?

BECAUSE
MY SON, YOU
USED THE WEAPON
AGAINST KRISHNA
WHO IS AN INCAR-
NATION OF VISHNU.*

"ON HEARING THIS, ASHWATTHAMA BADE HIS ARMY TO GO BACK TO THE CAMP.



"DURYODHANA, ASHWATTHAMA, KARNA AND OTHERS SPENT THE NIGHT IN DISCUSSING THE STRATEGY TO BE ADOPTED THE NEXT DAY.

WHAT IN YOUR ESTEEMED OPINION SHOULD WE DO NOW?

"ASHWATTHAMA SAID —

THOUGH MANY OF OUR ABLE WARRIORS HAVE BEEN KILLED, WE SHOULD NOT LOSE HEART. WITH KARNA IN COMMAND WE CAN STILL VANQUISH THE ENEMY.

"HIS WORDS WERE ENCOURAGING TO DURYODHANA, ADDRESSING KARNA, HE SAID —

BHEESHMA AND DRONA, OUR TWO VENERABLE COMMANDERS, ARE NO MORE. THEY WERE BRAVE BUT THEY WERE INCLINED TO BE PARTIAL TO THE PANDAVAS.

YOU ARE SURELY THE BEST MAN TO LEAD OUR FORCES NOW. YOU HAVE ALWAYS BEEN CONCERNED ABOUT OUR WELFARE. COME! TAKE CHARGE OF THE ARMY.

I WILL BE GLAD TO DO SO. CONSIDER THE PANDAVAS ALREADY DEFEATED.

"KARNA WAS FORMALLY INSTALLED AS THE THIRD COMMANDER OF THE KAURAVAS.

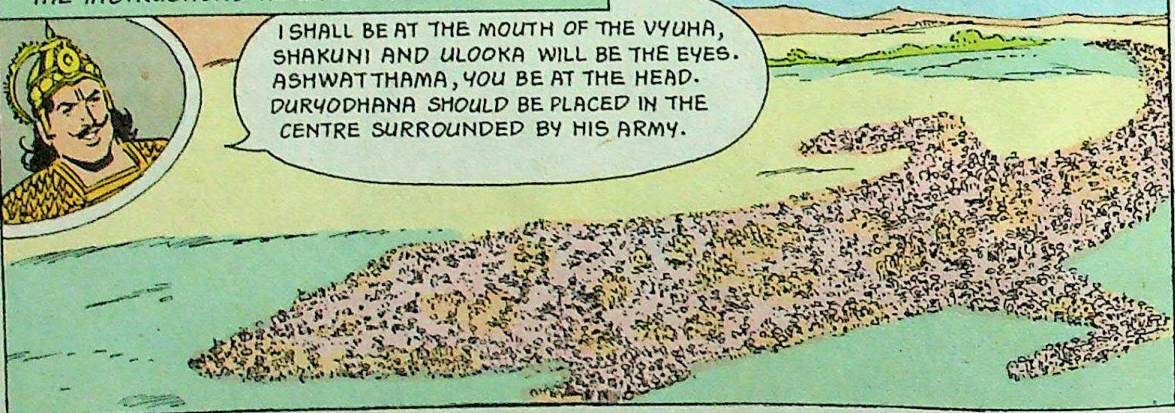
"ON THE MORNING OF THE SIXTEENTH DAY, THE KAURAVA CAMP RESOUNDED WITH THE VOICE OF KARNA. HE ARRANGED THE FORCES IN THE MAKARA VYUHA.*



"THE INSTRUCTIONS HE GAVE WERE VERY CLEAR.



I SHALL BE AT THE MOUTH OF THE VYUHA,
SHAKUNI AND ULOOKA WILL BE THE EYES.
ASHWATTHAMA, YOU BE AT THE HEAD.
DURYODHANA SHOULD BE PLACED IN THE
CENTRE SURROUNDED BY HIS ARMY.



"YUDHISHTHIRA REMARKED TO ARJUNA —

ARJUNA, BEHOLD THE
KAURAVAS BEREFT OF THEIR
MIGHTY WARRIORS. KARNA
IS THE ONLY HERO LEFT.

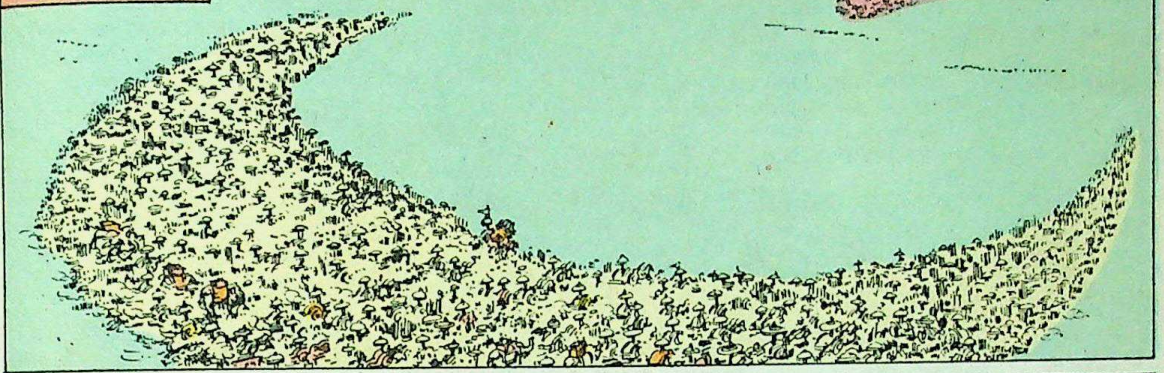


TODAY IT MUST BE
YOUR AIM TO KILL HIM.
ARRANGE OUR FORCES
ACCORDINGLY.

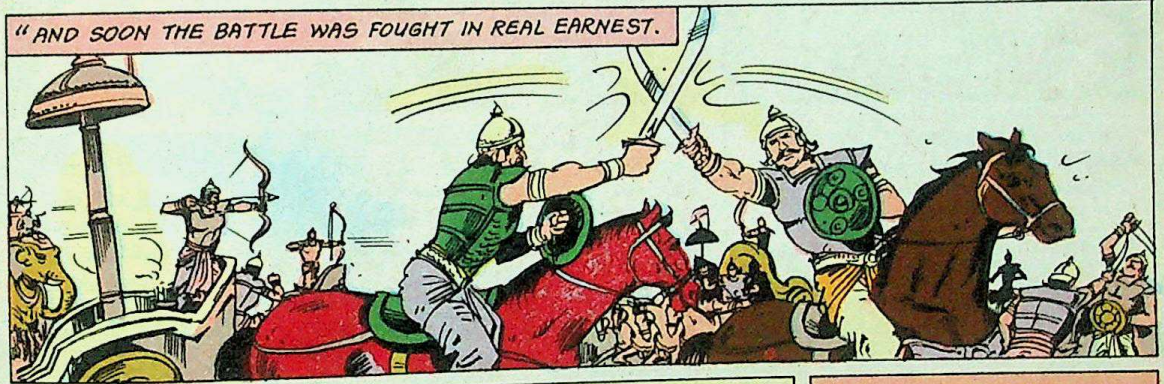
I WILL ARRANGE
OUR MEN IN THE
SHAPE OF A
CRESCENT.



"ARJUNA ARRAYED THE FORCES TO RESEMBLE A HALF MOON WITH BHEEMA ON THE LEFT AND DHRISTADYUMNA ON THE RIGHT."



"AND SOON THE BATTLE WAS FOUGHT IN REAL EARNEST."

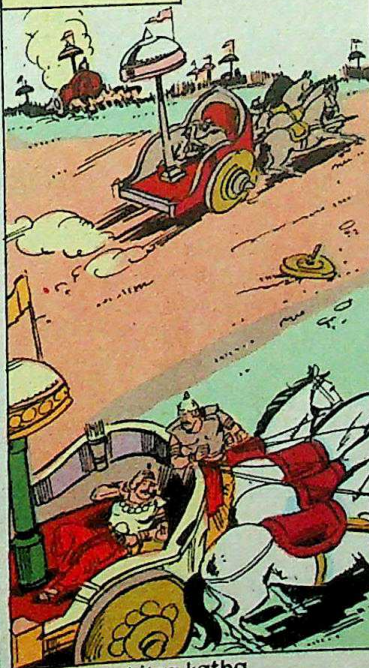


"FIERCE WAS THE DUEL BETWEEN ASHWATTHAMA AND BHEEMA."

"AFTER A VIGOROUS EXCHANGE OF ARROWS, THEY MADE EACH OTHER FAINT."

"ARJUNA WAS MEANWHILE WRECKING DESTRUCTION AMONG THE SAMSHAPTAKAS WHO HAD CHALLENGED HIM ONCE AGAIN."

WHAT A FIGHT!
BHEEMA'S MIGHT IS
WELL MATCHED BY
ASHWATTHAMA'S
SKILL.



amar chitra katha

"EVEN AS HE KEPT REDUCING THEIR NUMBERS, ASHWATTHAMA CALLED OUT TO HIM FROM ANOTHER DIRECTION.

COME, ARJUNA. TREAT ME LIKE YOUR GUEST. ENTERTAIN ME WITH ALL YOUR WEAPONS.

"ARJUNA CONSULTED KRISHNA.

SHOULD I FIGHT THE SAMSHAPTAKAS OR ACCEPT ASHWATTHAMA'S CHALLENGE? TELL ME, O KRISHNA.

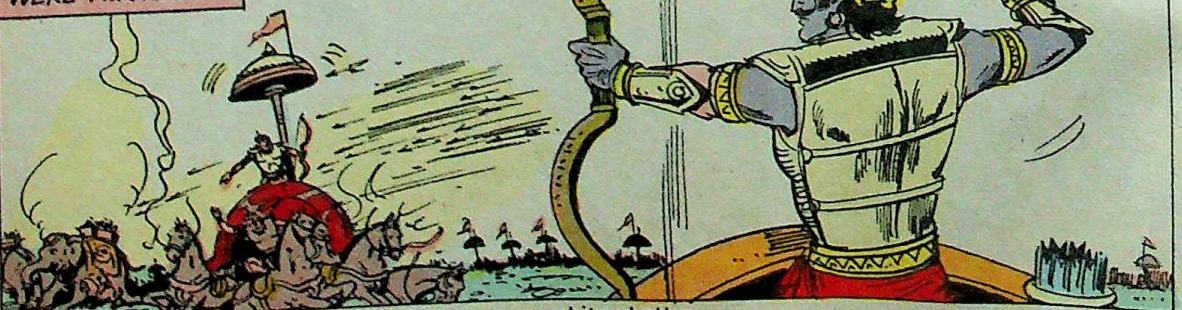
"IN RESPONSE, KRISHNA LED THE CHARIOT TOWARDS ASHWATTHAMA. A FURIOUS FIGHT ENSUED.

"SEEING ASHWATTHAMA GAINING AN EDGE OVER ARJUNA, KRISHNA SAID—

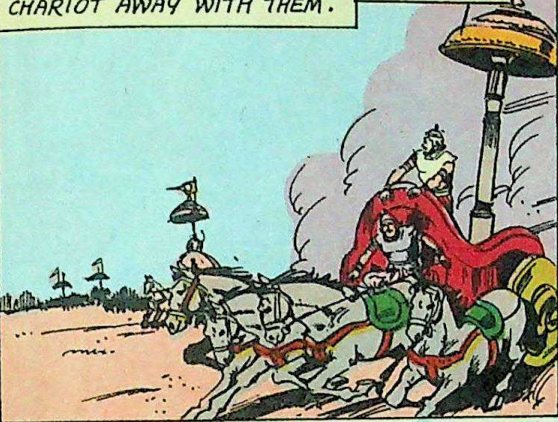
WHAT HAS COME OVER YOU? HAVE YOU LOST YOUR HOLD ON YOUR GANDEEVA?

SEE HOW THIS SON OF MY GURU IS TRYING TO KILL US. I WILL TAKE CARE OF HIM.

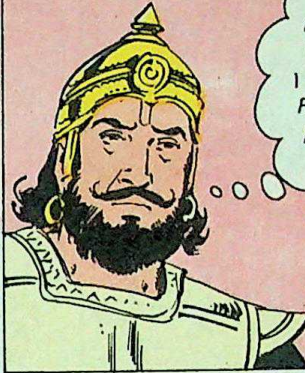
"THE FURY WITH WHICH ARJUNA THEN SHOT HIS ARROWS PIERCED NOT ONLY ASHWATTHAMA'S HORSES AND CHARIOT, BUT ALSO FELLE THE ELEPHANTS AND SOLDIERS WHO WERE FAR AWAY.



"GRIEVOUSLY INJURED, ASHWATTHAMA'S HORSES FLED THE FIELD, CARRYING THE CHARIOT AWAY WITH THEM.



"AS HE WAS LED AWAY FROM THE FIELD, ASHWATTHAMA REFLECTED.

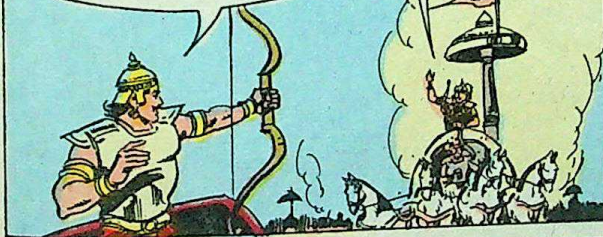


KRISHNA AND ARJUNA ARE BOUND TO BE VICTORIOUS. I WILL NOT CONFRONT ARJUNA AGAIN. LET ME INSTEAD JOIN KARNA'S FORCES.

"KARNA WAS BUSY CONFRONTING NAKULA'S ONSLAUGHT.

O KARNA! THE GODS ARE INDEED PLEASED WITH ME TODAY. HOW I LONG TO KILL YOU, THE ROOT CAUSE OF ALL THIS ANIMOSITY!

BRAVE MEN DO NOT TALK; THEY ACT. LET ME PUT YOUR PRIDE IN ITS PLACE.



"KARNA ACTED OUT HIS THREAT AND UNABLE TO CONTAIN HIS ATTACK, NAKULA TRIED TO ESCAPE. KARNA LAUGHED AND SAID:

DO YOU REALISE YOU WERE BOASTING IN VAIN? RUN AWAY NOW.



"BY NOON WHILE KARNA CIRCLED THE BATTLEFIELD CAUSING HAVOC AND DESTRUCTION, SEVERAL DUELS WERE BEING FOUGHT.

"QUYUTSU FOUGHT ULOOKA.

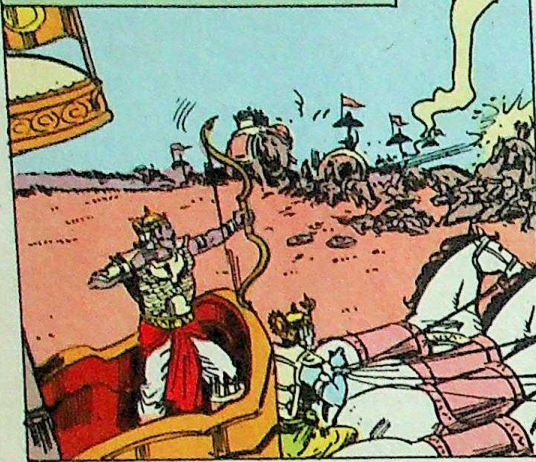
"KRIPA CONFRONTED DHRISTADYUMNA TO AVENGE THE DEATH OF DRONA.



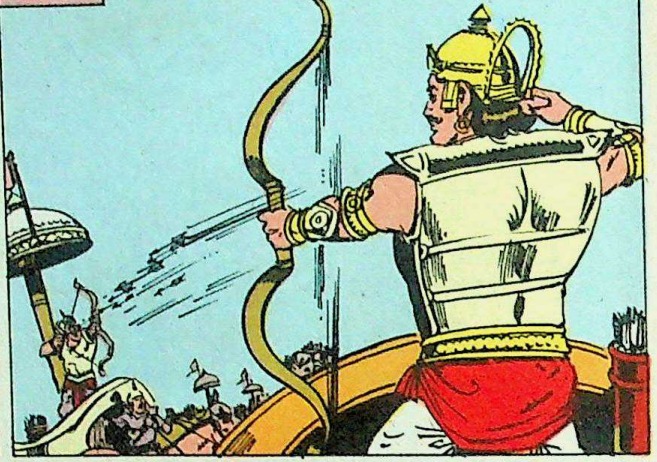
"KRITAVARMA'S ARROW PIERCED SHIKHANDI'S ARMOUR AND, AS HE FAINTED, HE HELD ON TO THE FLAGPOST.



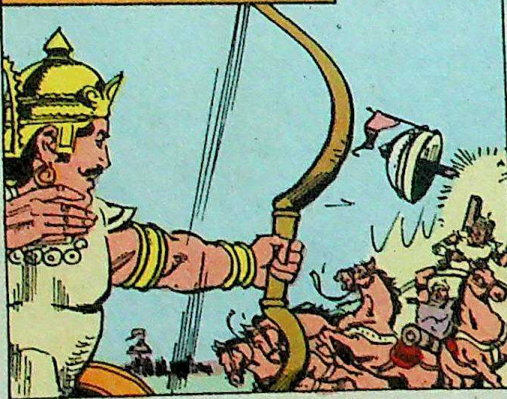
"ARJUNA WAS IN HIS ELEMENT DESTROYING THE SAMSHAPATAKAS WHO HAD ESCAPED HIS FURY EARLIER.



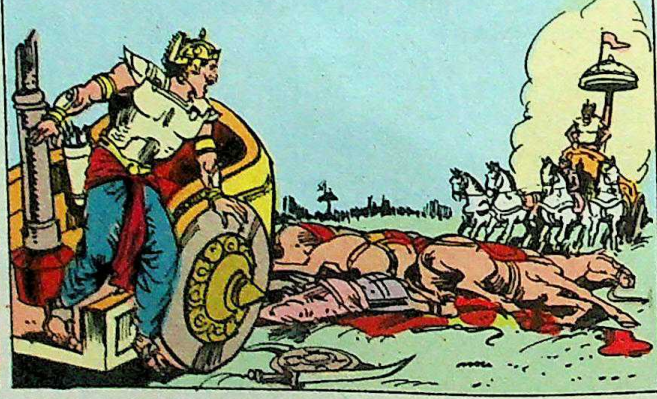
"DURYODHANA'S CONFRONTATION WITH YUDHISHTHIRA WAS IN KEEPING WITH A BRAVE KING. BUT NOT FOR LONG.



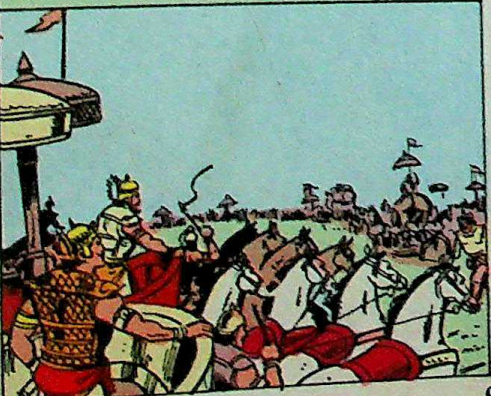
"WITH FOUR WELL-ARMED ARROWS, YUDHISHTHIRA KILLED DURYODHANA'S FOUR HORSES; WITH THE FIFTH ARROW, HE BEHEADED THE CHARIOTEER. WITH THE SIXTH, THE BANNER...



"...WITH THE SEVENTH, HE BROKE DURYODHANA'S BOW, AND WITH THE EIGHTH, HE SEVERED THE SWORD FROM DURYODHANA'S HAND.



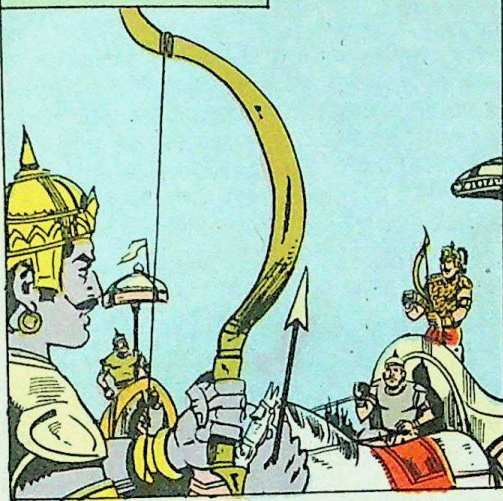
"SEEING HIS PLIGHT, KARNA, ASHWATHAMA AND KRIPA RUSHED TO HIS AID. SOON THE FIGHT BECAME GENERAL.



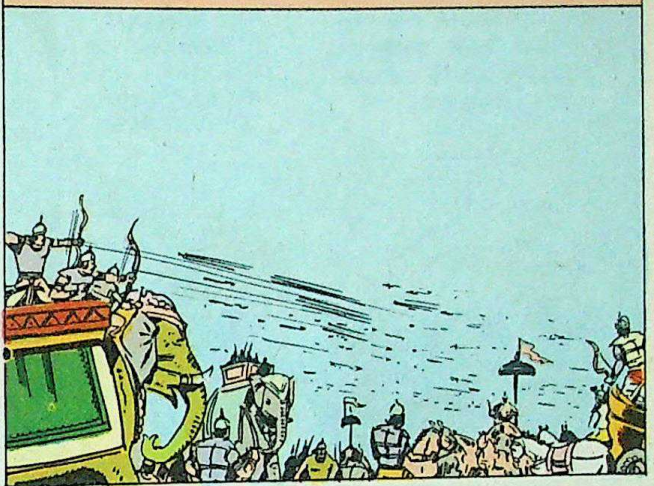
"SO SWIFTLY DID ARJUNA SHOOT HIS ARROWS THAT THE SKY AS WELL AS THE EIGHT DIRECTIONS SEEMED TO BE FILLED WITH THE ARROWS RELEASED BY HIS GANDEEVA. HE SEEMED TO BE DANCING IN HIS CHARIOT.



"AFTER INFLECTING DEFEAT ON DURYODHANA, ASHWATTHAMA AND KRITAVARMA, ARJUNA TURNED TO KARNA.

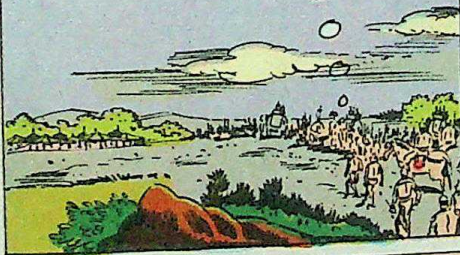


"WHEN KARNA'S SHARP ARROWS FOUND THEIR MARK AND WOUNDED BOTH ARJUNA AND KRISHNA, THE PANDAVA WARRIORS GATHERED TO ATTACK HIM.



"AT SUNSET, THE SOLDIERS BEGAN TO RETURN TO THEIR CAMP.

LET US HOPE WE WILL NOT HAVE TO FIGHT AT NIGHT AGAIN.



"WHEN THE KAURAVA WARRIORS GATHERED TO DISCUSS THE STRATEGY FOR THE NEXT DAY, KARNA DECLARED—

ARJUNA IS CAREFUL, CLEVER AND DETERMINED. TODAY, WE FELL PREY TO HIS TACTICS. BUT TOMORROW I WILL SURELY MEET HIS CHALLENGE.

SO BE IT! COME, LET US ALL GET SOME REST NOW.



"ON THE DAWN OF THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF THE BATTLE, KARNA CAME TO DURYODHANA.

TODAY I AM DETERMINED TO FACE ARJUNA IN A DUEL. I WILL KILL OR BE KILLED.

LIKE ARJUNA, I TOO HAVE ACCESS TO CELESTIAL WEAPONS. IN STRENGTH, SWIFTNESS AND REACH, I CAN SURPASS ARJUNA.

MY BOW, VIJAYA IS EVEN BETTER THAN THE FAMED GANDEEVA OF ARJUNA—YET THERE ARE SOME POINTS IN WHICH I CANNOT EQUAL HIM.



HE HAS TWO INEXHAUSTIBLE CELESTIAL QUIVERS AND WHAT IS MORE, HE HAS KRISHNA AS HIS CHARIOTEER. IF ONLY SHALYA COULD DRIVE MY CHARIOT!

AS YOU WISH. I WILL ENSURE THAT YOU DO NOT RUN OUT OF WEAPONS OR CHARIOTS. I WILL TRY TO CONVINCE SHALYA ALSO.

"WHEN DURYODHANA REQUESTED SHALYA TO ACT AS KARNA'S CHARIOTEER, HE WAS LIVID WITH RAGE.

HOW CAN YOU INSULT A KSHATRIYA LIKE ME BY ASKING ME TO DO SUCH SERVILE WORK. I WILL GO BACK TO MY KINGDOM TODAY!

BUT, SHALYA, I DO NOT MEAN TO INSULT YOU AT ALL. I CONSIDER YOU TO BE SUPERIOR EVEN TO KRISHNA IN YOUR ABILITY TO HANDLE HORSES.

"SANJAYA NARRATED THE SCENE TO DHRITARASHTRA.

WHEN YOUR SON PUBLICLY PRAISED SHALYA AS BEING SUPERIOR TO KRISHNA, HE RELENTED AND AGREED TO BE CHARIOTEER TO KARNA ON CONDITION THAT THERE WOULD BE NO RESTRICTION ON WHAT HE COULD SAY.

"RESPLENDENT LIKE THE SUN AND FIRE ON A MIGHTY CLOUD, SAT KARNA AND SHALYA ON THE CHARIOT. ADDRESSING KARNA, DURYODHANA SAID—

O KARNA! THE TASK THAT THE GREAT BHEESHMA AND DRONA COULD NOT FULFIL IS YOURS TODAY. GO FORTH AND ANNIHILATE THE ENEMIES.

"KARNA SAID TO SHALYA—

LEAD ME TO THE PANDAVAS! I WILL KILL ALL FIVE OF THEM TODAY.

"SHALYA HAD CONSENTED TO THE TASK ON CONDITION THAT HE WOULD BE FREE TO SPEAK HIS MIND. SO HE SAID—

WAIT TILL YOU HEAR THE TWANG OF THE GANDEEVA, TILL YOU SEE BHEEMA OVERPOWERING ELEPHANT ARMIES, TILL YOU WITNESS THE SWIFT ARROWS OF YUDHISHTHIRA, NAKULA AND SAHADEVA.

OH! COME ON. LET US GO!

KARNA IN COMMAND

"AS THEY PROCEEDED TOWARDS THE BATTLEFIELD, SHALYA CONTINUED TO EXTOL ARJUNA'S VIRTUES.

LIKE THE SUN AND THE MOON ARE KRISHNA AND ARJUNA. YOU ARE A MERE FIREFLY IN COMPARISON.

I PROMISED TO ALLOW YOU TO SPEAK FREELY, OTHERWISE...



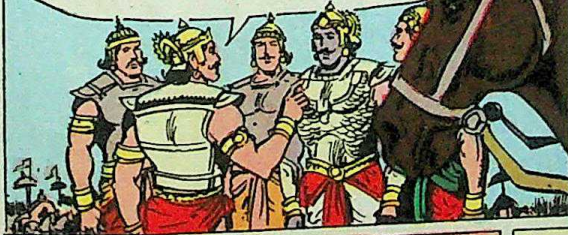
"BUT WHEN THEY CONTINUED TO EXCHANGE INSULTS DURYODHANA INTERVENED—

KARNA, PLEASE STOP ARGUING. SHALYA, I REQUEST YOU TO PUT AN END TO THIS FUTILE TALK.

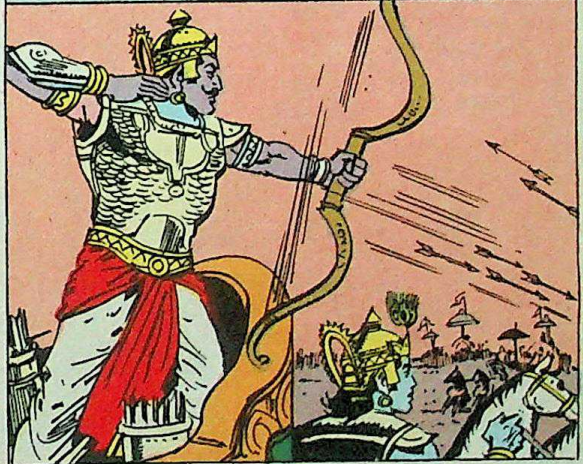


"SEEING THE COMPLEX FORMATION OF THE KAURAVAS, YUDHISHTHIRA ASKED ARJUNA TO ARRAY THEIR FORCES IN A SUITABLE FORMATION.

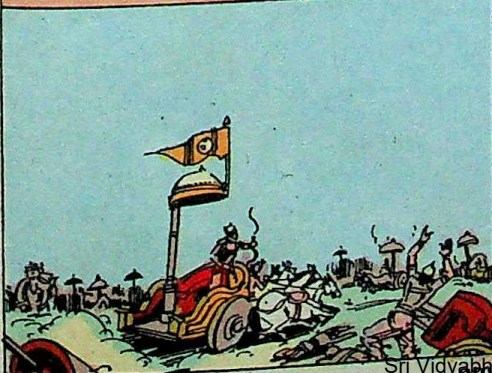
ARJUNA, YOU ATTACK KARNA. BHEEMA WILL CONFRONT DURYODHANA. NAKULA WILL FACE VRISHASENA*, SAHADEVA WILL MEET SHAKUNI AND DHRISTADYUMNA WILL FIGHT ASHWATTHAMA. I WILL FIGHT KRIPACHARYA.



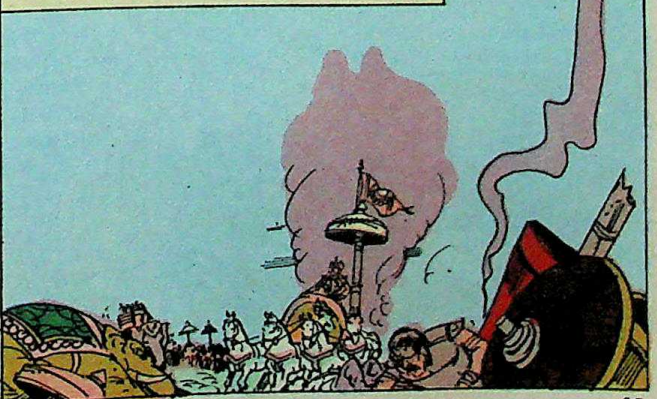
"WHEN THE SAMSHAPTAKAS CALLED OUT TO ARJUNA, HE ATTACKED THEM SINGLE-HANDED.



"AFTER THEIR NUMBERS BECAME DEPLETED, HE RAGED THROUGH THE KAURAVA FORCES LIKE FURY INCARNATE.



"KARNA TOO WAS IN HIS ELEMENT. HE RESEMBLED INDRA DEMOLISHING THE ASURAS.



* KARNA'S SON.

"YUDHISHTHIRA APPROACHED HIM.

LET ME SEE
YOUR FAMED
PROWESS. SHOW
ME HOW POWER-
FUL YOU ARE.

I WILL BE
TOO GLAD
TO DO SO.

"ALTHOUGH SATYAKI AND OTHERS CAME TO HELP
YUDHISHTHIRA, KARNA ROUTED THEM ALL. WHEN
YUDHISHTHIRA'S ARMOUR WAS TORN ASUNDER,
HE TURNED AWAY.

ARE YOU A
TRUE KSHATRIYA?
THEN HOW CAN YOU
RUN AWAY? GO BACK
TO ARJUNA OR KRISHNA.
I WILL NOT KILL YOU
IN THE BATTLEFIELD.

"BHEEMA WAS ENRAGED AT YUDHISHTHIRA'S
INSULT. UNDER HIS ATTACK, KARNA FAINTED.

I WILL CUT OFF
HIS TONGUE FOR
INSULTING MY
BROTHER AND
KING.

RESTRAIN YOUR-
SELF BHEEMA.
REMEMBER, KILL-
ING KARNA IS THE
TASK OF ARJUNA.

"MEANWHILE ASHWATTHAMA CHALLENGED
ARJUNA TO A DUEL AND COVERED HIM WITH
ARROWS. KRISHNA EXCLAIMED—

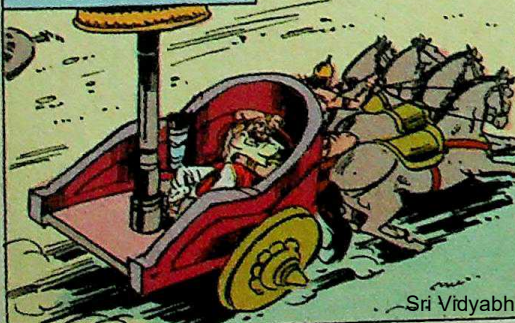
WHAT HAS COME
OVER YOU, ARJUNA? HAS
YOUR GRIP LOOSENED?
HAVE YOU LOST YOUR
STRENGTH? THIS IS NO
TIME TO BE CONSIDER-
ATE TO A GURU OR
HIS SON.

"KRISHNA'S TAUNTS HAD THE DESIRED
EFFECT. WITH DIVINE WEAPONS, ARJUNA
ATTACKED ASHWATTHAMA WITH SUCH
FORCE THAT THE LATTER FAINTED AND
HIS CHARIOT WAS DRIVEN AWAY FROM
THE BATTLEFIELD.

"KRISHNA THEN DREW ARJUNA'S ATTENTION TO
KARNA.

BEHOLD KARNA!
HOW GRACEFULLY HE
FIGHTS. THE FIELD IS
STREWN WITH HIS
VICTIMS. IT IS TIME
YOU CONFRONTED
HIM.

YES, I WILL. BUT
WHERE IS
YUDHISHTHIRA?



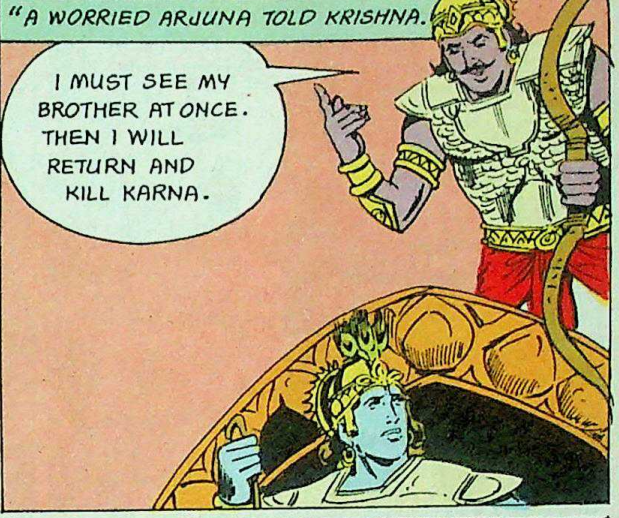
KARNA IN COMMAND

"BHEEMA TOLD HIM.

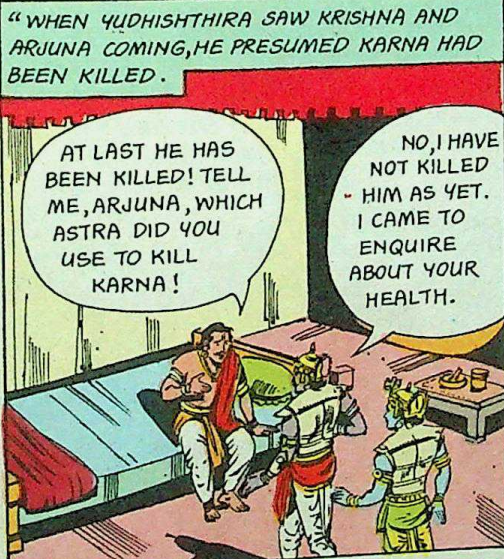


YUDHISHTHIRA,
WOUNDED BY KARNA,
HAS RETURNED
TO THE CAMP.

"A WORRIED ARJUNA TOLD KRISHNA.



I MUST SEE MY
BROTHER AT ONCE.
THEN I WILL
RETURN AND
KILL KARNA.

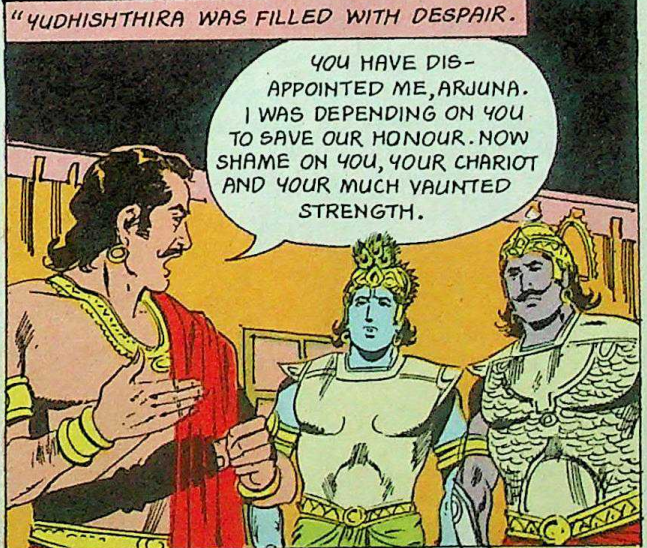


"WHEN YUDHISHTHIRA SAW KRISHNA AND
ARJUNA COMING, HE PRESUMED KARNA HAD
BEEN KILLED.

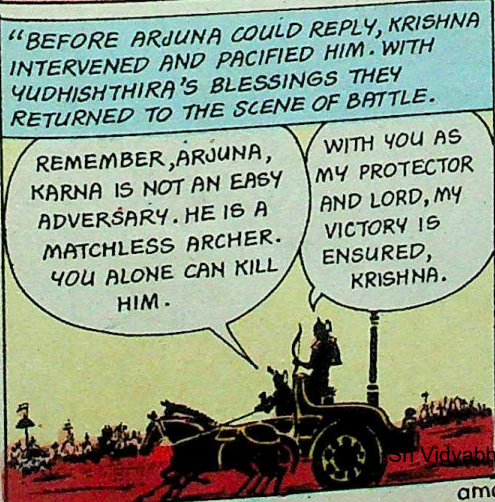
AT LAST HE HAS
BEEN KILLED! TELL
ME, ARJUNA, WHICH
ASTRA DID YOU
USE TO KILL
KARNA!

NO, I HAVE
NOT KILLED
HIM AS YET.
I CAME TO
ENQUIRE
ABOUT YOUR
HEALTH.

"YUDHISHTHIRA WAS FILLED WITH DESPAIR.



YOU HAVE DIS-
APPOINTED ME, ARJUNA.
I WAS DEPENDING ON YOU
TO SAVE OUR HONOUR. NOW
SHAME ON YOU, YOUR CHARIOT
AND YOUR MUCH VAUNTED
STRENGTH.



"BEFORE ARJUNA COULD REPLY, KRISHNA
INTERVENED AND PACIFIED HIM. WITH
YUDHISHTHIRA'S BLESSINGS THEY
RETURNED TO THE SCENE OF BATTLE.

REMEMBER, ARJUNA,
KARNA IS NOT AN EASY
ADVERSARY. HE IS A
MATCHLESS ARCHER.
YOU ALONE CAN KILL
HIM.

WITH YOU AS
MY PROTECTOR
AND LORD, MY
VICTORY IS
ENSURED,
KRISHNA.

"SHALYA'S EARLIER TAUNTS WERE NOW REPLACED WITH ENCOURAGEMENT AND ADMIRATION FOR KARNA.

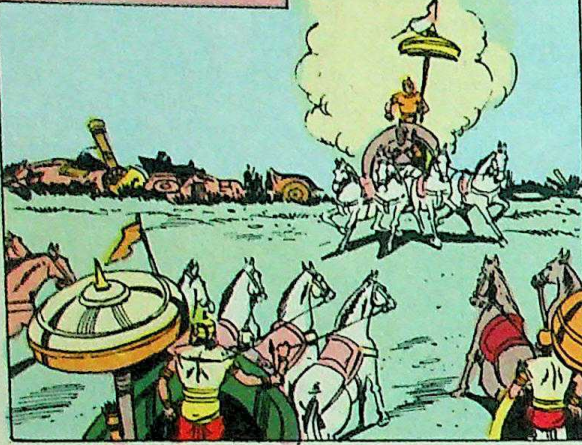


HERE COMES
ARJUNA. NOW YOU
ALONE CAN KILL
HIM.

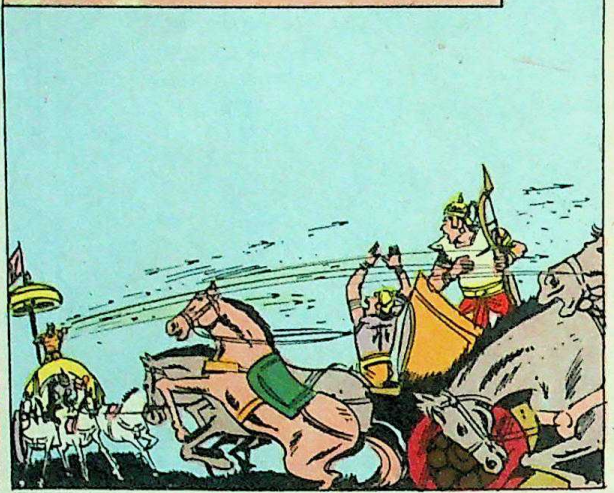
TAKE ME
TO HIM.

MAHABHARATA-37

"BUT WHEN KARNA TRIED TO APPROACH ARJUNA, HIS PATH WAS BLOCKED BY FIVE PANDAVA WARRIORS.



"KARNA ROUTED THEM ALL IN A TRICE.



"IN THE GENERAL FIGHT THAT ENSUED, BHEEMA ENCOUNTERED DUHSHASANA.

COME DUHSHASANA!
I HAVE WAITED LONG
TO FIGHT WITH YOU.
I HAVE AN ACCOUNT
TO SETTLE.

I TOO
REMEMBER
A LOT,
BHEEMA.



"WHEN HIS BOW WAS BROKEN, BHEEMA TOOK UP A HUGE MACE.

I REMEMBER HOW
YOU HELD DRAUPADI'S
HAIR WITH YOUR SINFUL
HANDS.

I ALSO REMEMBER
HOW SHAKUNI WANTED
TO ENSLAVE HER
ALONG WITH ALL OF
YOU.



"AFTER HE KNOCKED DUHSHASANA OFF HIS CHARIOT, BHEEMA LET OUT A ROAR.

YOU REMEMBER,
DO YOU? THEN YOU
WILL REMEMBER
HOW I HAD VOWED
TO DRINK YOUR
BLOOD.



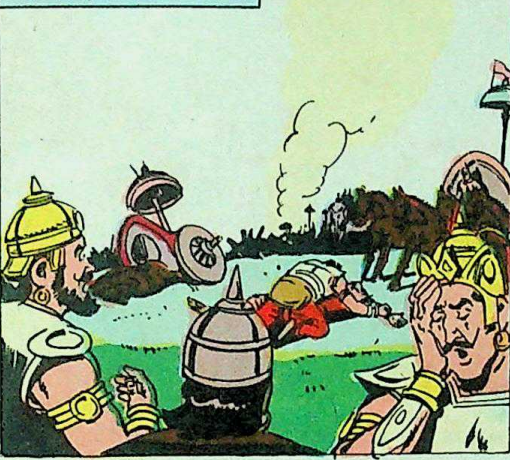
"BHEEMA TURNED TO DURYODHANA.

I HAVE YOUR BROTHER
AT MY MERCY. TRY AND
SAVE HIM NOW.



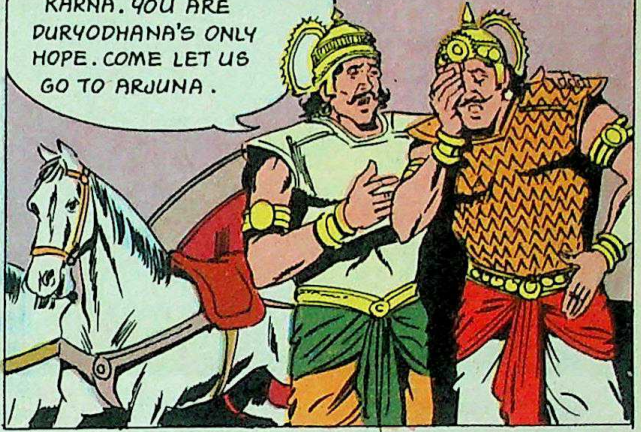
KARNA IN COMMAND

"BHEEMA CUT OFF DUHSHASANA'S RIGHT HAND, RIPPED OPEN HIS CHEST AND TASTED HIS BLOOD.



"KARNA WAS GRIEF-STRICKEN. SHALYA COUNSELLED HIM.

DO NOT LOSE HEART, KARNA. YOU ARE DURYODHANA'S ONLY HOPE. COME LET US GO TO ARJUNA.



"KARNA'S SON VRISHASENA WAS TORMENTING NAKULA. BHEEMA CALLED TO ARJUNA FOR HELP.

I WILL KILL KARNA'S SON IN FRONT OF HIM.

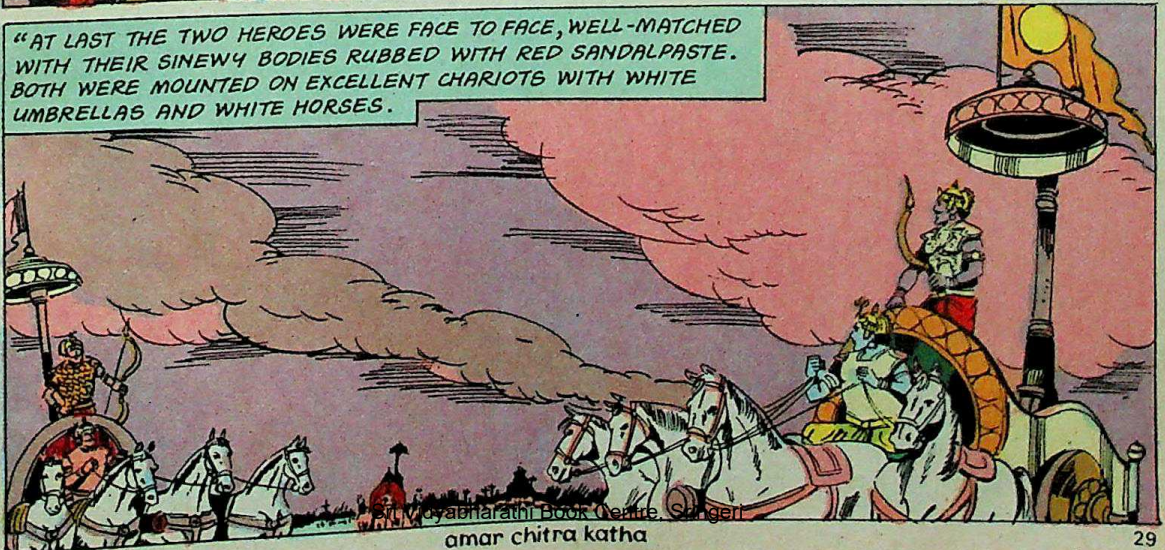


"ARJUNA'S SHARP ARROWS FOUND THEIR MARK. KARNA SAW HIS SON BEING KILLED. ENRAGED HE SAID —

NOW I CANNOT WAIT TO KILL THIS ARJUNA. TAKE ME CLOSER, O SHALYA.

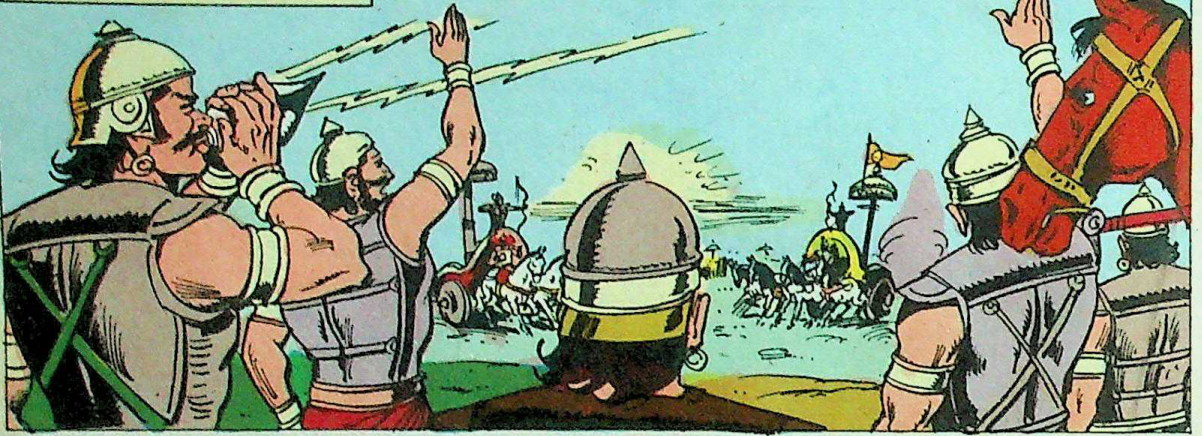


"AT LAST THE TWO HEROES WERE FACE TO FACE, WELL-MATCHED WITH THEIR SINEWY BODIES RUBBED WITH RED SANDALPASTE. BOTH WERE MOUNTED ON EXCELLENT CHARIOTS WITH WHITE UMBRELLAS AND WHITE HORSES.



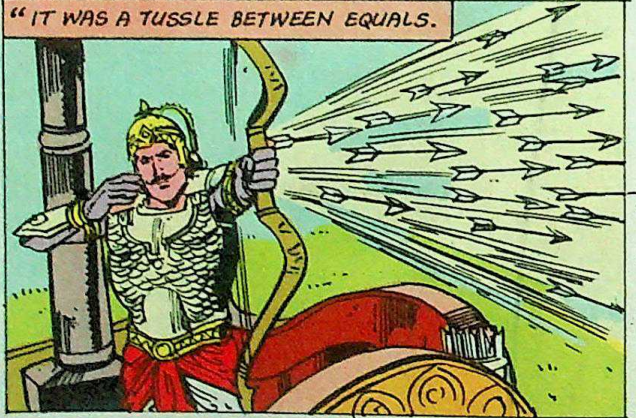
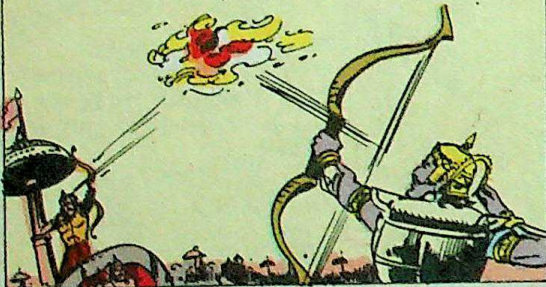
MAHABHARATA-37

"AS THEY WERE ENGAGED IN THE DUEL, THEIR MEN ENCOURAGED THEM WITH CHEERS AND THE BLOWING OF CONCH SHELLS.



"SOON, INSTEAD OF EARTHLY WEAPONS, THEY RESORTED TO CELESTIAL ONES. ARJUNA SENT OFF THE AGNEYASTRA AND KARNA COUNTERED IT WITH THE VARUNASTRA.

"IT WAS A TUSSELE BETWEEN EQUALS.

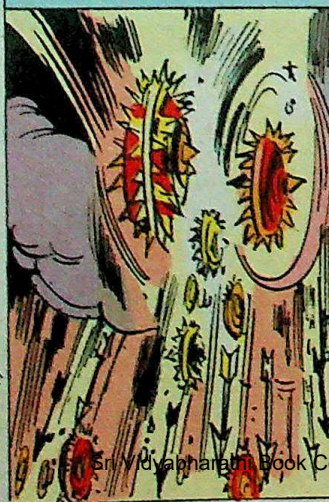


"KRISHNA SAID —

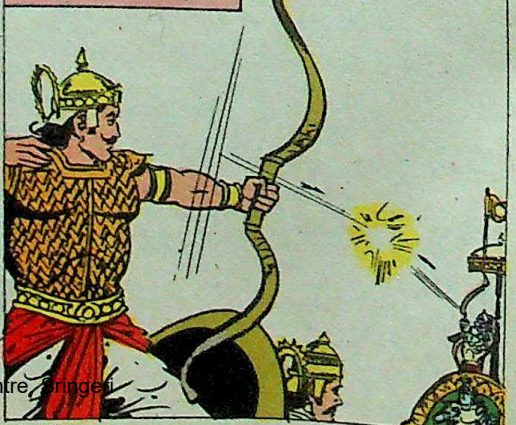
HOW COME KARNA IS ABLE TO DESTROY ALL YOUR WEAPONS TODAY? ROUSE YOURSELF!

I WILL USE THE BRAHMASTRA NOW.

"THE BRAHMASTRA COVERED THE FIELD WITH ARROWS AND DEAD BODIES BUT KARNA'S ARROWS WERE ALSO COMING IN A CONTINUOUS STREAM.

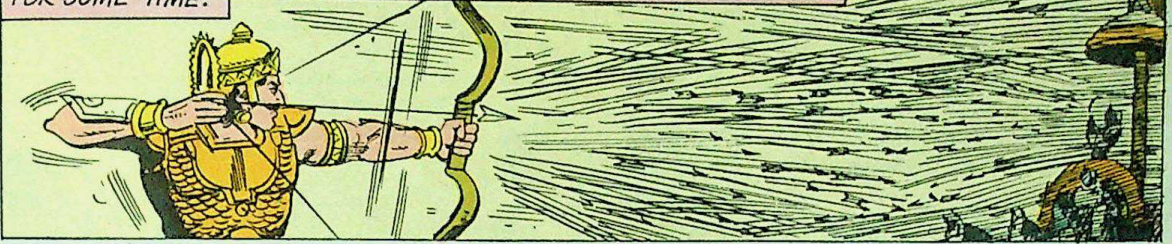


"THE AIR RESOUNDED WITH THE TERRIBLE TWANGS OF THE GANDEEVA OF ARJUNA AND THE VIJAYA OF KARNA. THEY TWANGED TO LET FORTH A BARRAGE OF ARROWS. ELEVEN TIMES KARNA CUT ARJUNA'S BOW STRINGS. QUICK AS A FLASH, ARJUNA REPLACED THEM EVERY TIME. KARNA THEN DISCHARGED FIVE SNAKE-LIKE ARROWS. ARJUNA CUT EVERY ONE OF THEM INTO PIECES.



KARNA IN COMMAND

"SO NUMEROUS WERE THE ARROWS SHOT BY ARJUNA THAT NOTHING — NEITHER KARNA'S CHARIOT NOR THE SUN IN THE SKY — WAS VISIBLE FOR SOME TIME.

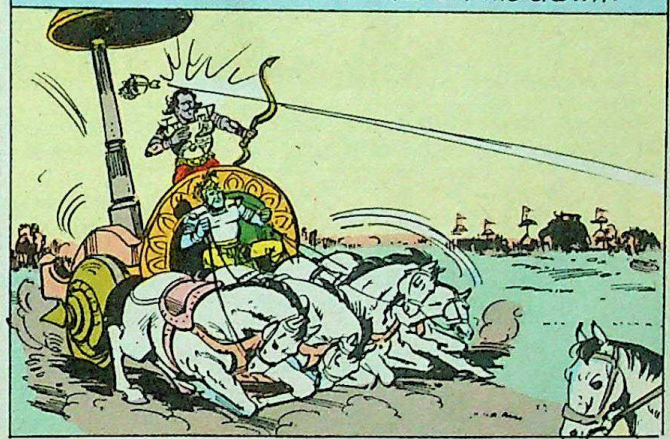


"SOON THE WARRIORS BEHIND KARNA FLED IN TERROR OF ARJUNA. KARNA AIMED THE NAGASTRA AT ARJUNA'S NECK.

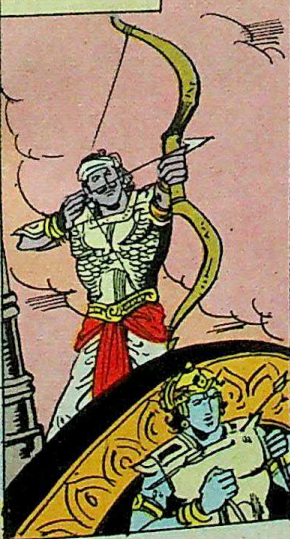
ARJUNA! BID FAREWELL TO THE WORLD. THIS IS YOUR LAST MOMENT.



"JUST IN TIME, KRISHNA PRESSED HARD SO THAT THE HORSES BENT DOWN AND THE CHARIOT SUNK BY FIVE INCHES IN THE GROUND. NOW THE WEAPON SCRAPPED PAST ARJUNA'S HEAD AND KNOCKED OFF HIS CROWN.

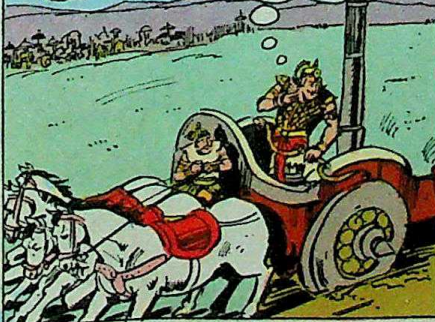


"ARJUNA GATHERED HIS CURLY TRESSES IN A WHITE KERCHIEF AND RESUMED FIGHTING. BY NOW EVEN KRISHNA AND SHALYA WERE WOUNDED.



"MEANWHILE, KARNA'S CHARIOT WHEEL WAS SINKING INTO THE GROUND. WHEN HE NOTICED IT, HE RECALLED HOW A BRAHMANA HAD ONCE CURSED HIM.

WHEN YOU ARE CONFRONTING YOUR BIGGEST ENEMY, YOUR CHARIOT WHEELS WILL SINK INTO THE GROUND. AS YOU KILLED MY POOR COW, YOU TOO WILL BE KILLED.



"BY NOW THE LEFT WHEEL WAS TOTALLY SUNK IN THE SOFT EARTH. KARNA WAS FORCED TO DESCEND.

ARJUNA, PLEASE STOP FIGHTING WHILE I RAISE THIS WHEEL. IT IS NOT FAIR TO FIGHT ME NOW WHEN I AM ON THE GROUND.



"KRISHNA WAS FURIOUS.

SO YOU WANT US TO
BE FAIR. DID YOU THINK
OF BEING FAIR AT THE
GAME OF DICE? WERE
YOU RIGHTEOUS WHEN
YOU SURROUNDED AND
KILLED ABHIMANYU?

"KARNA CLIMBED ONTO HIS CHARIOT AGAIN AND
FOUGHT ARJUNA. WHEN HE MANAGED TO INJURE
HIM, HE GOT OFF THE CHARIOT AGAIN. KRISHNA
SAID—

HURRY, ARJUNA!
KILL HIM BEFORE HE
GETS UP ON HIS
CHARIOT.

"ARJUNA INVOKED A DIVINE ASTRA, ANJALIKA, AND AIMED IT AT KARNA WHO WAS STILL
STRUGGLING TO LIFT THE WHEEL.

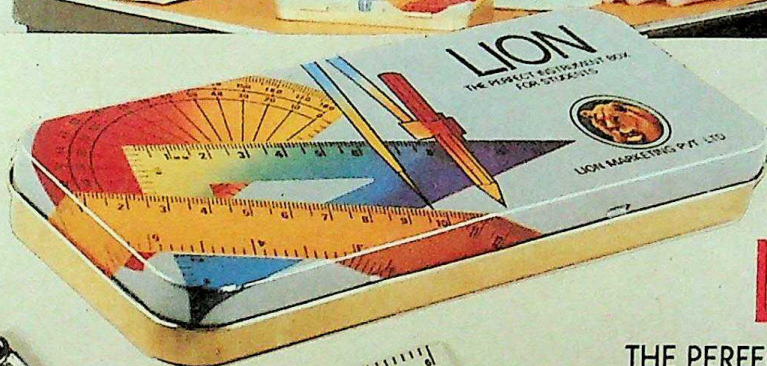
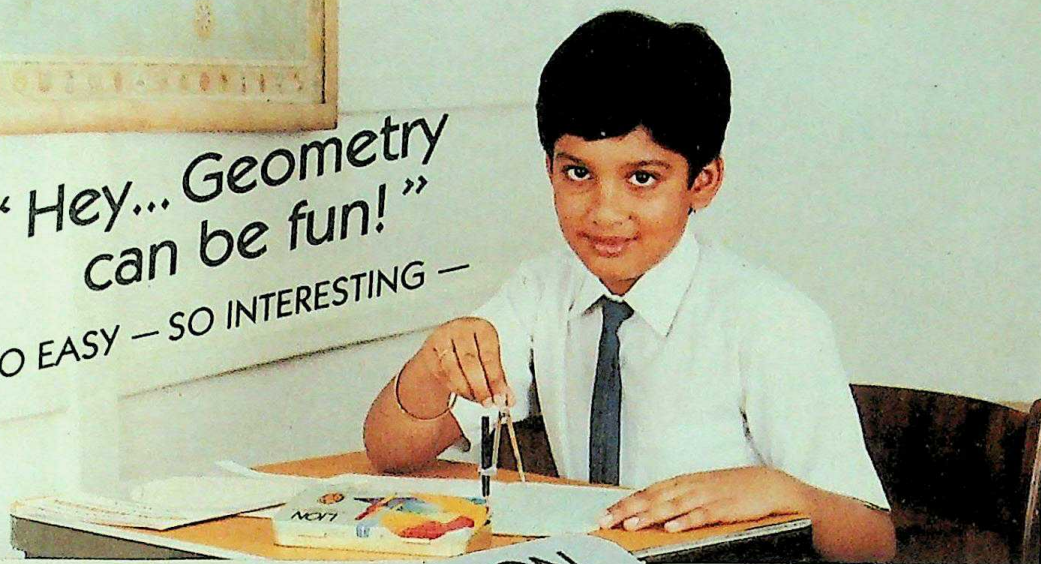
IF I HAVE LIVED A
DUTIFUL AND RIGHTEOUS
LIFE, MAY THIS WEAPON
DESTROY MY ENEMY.

LIKE THE SUN DESCENDING ON
EARTH, THE HEAD OF THE GREAT
KARNA FELL ON THE GROUND.

"THUS ENDS THE THIRTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF OUR RENDERING
OF VYASA'S IMMORTAL ITIHASA MAHABHARATA.

amar chitra katha

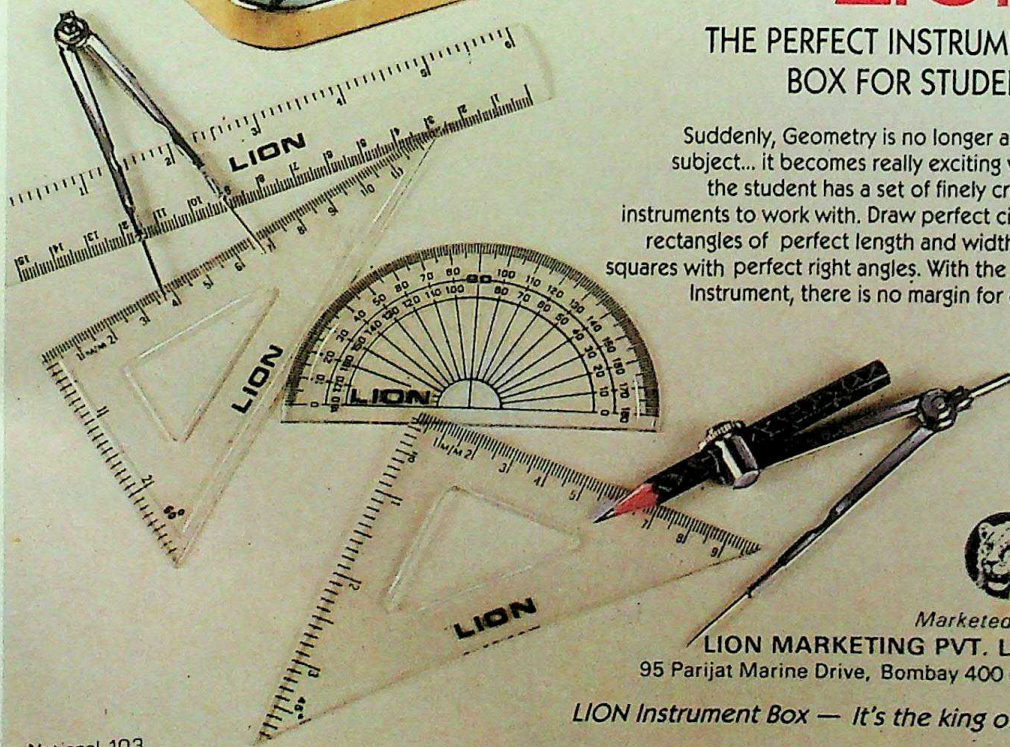
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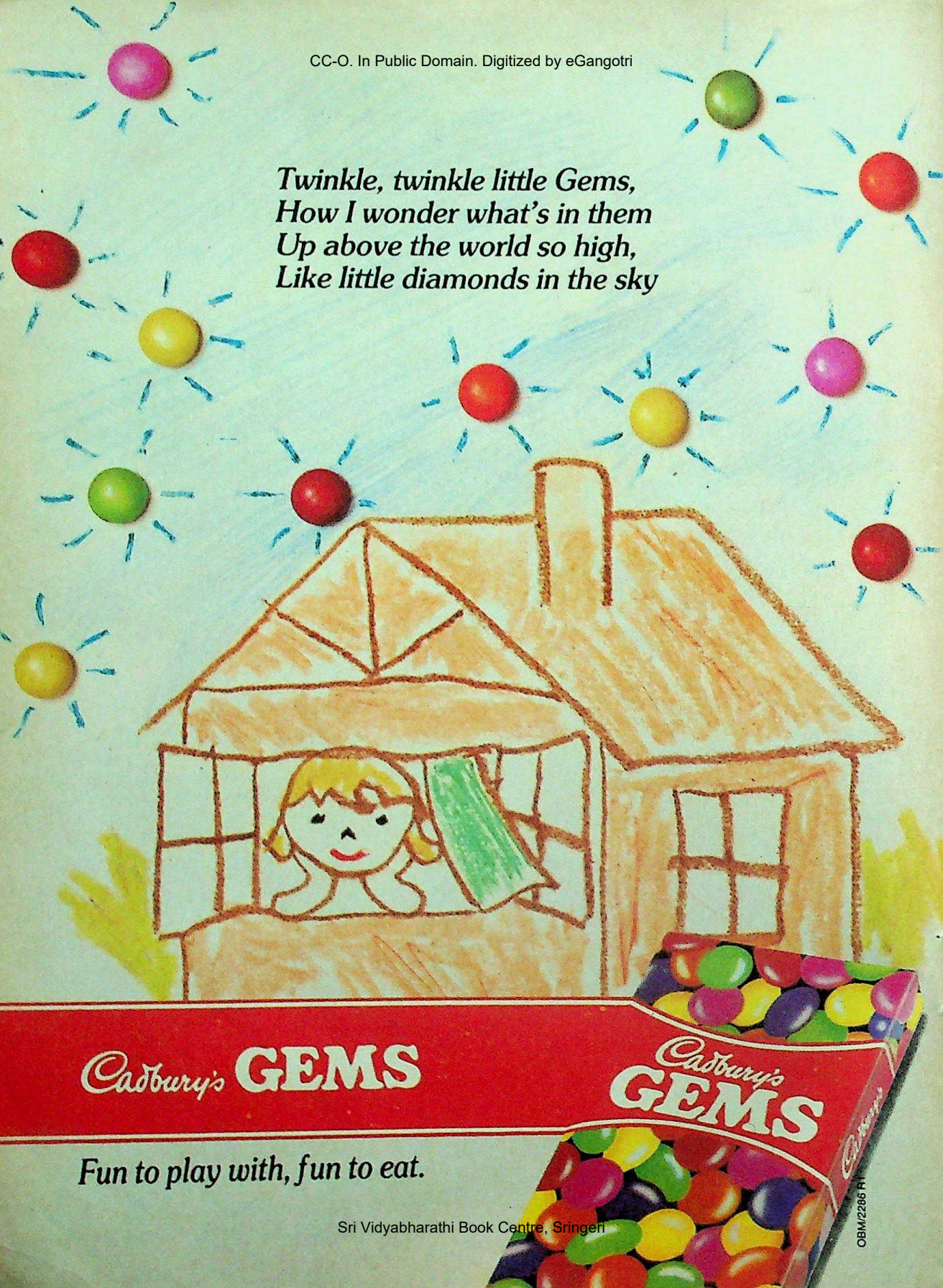
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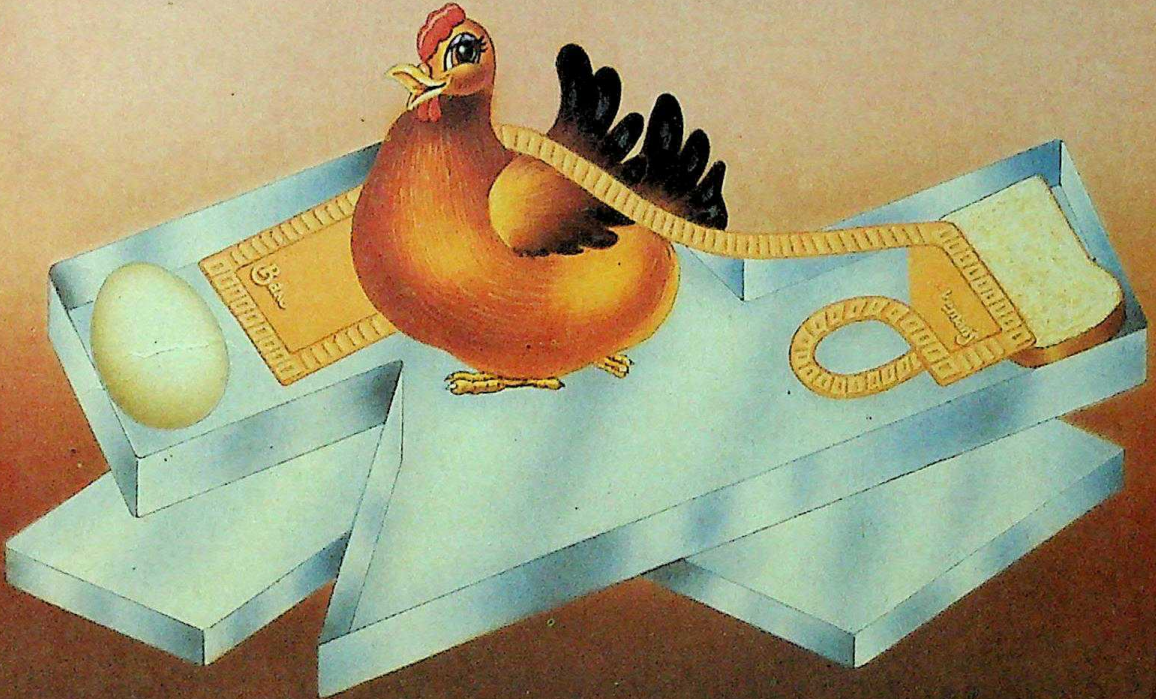


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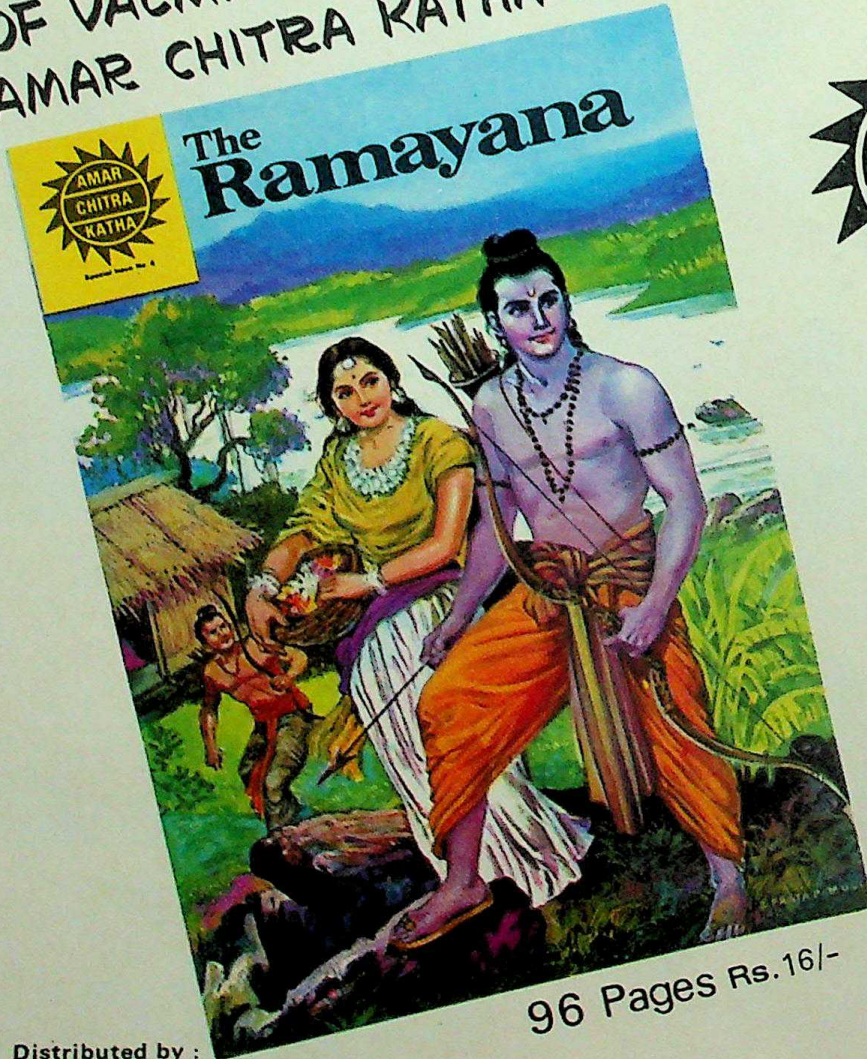


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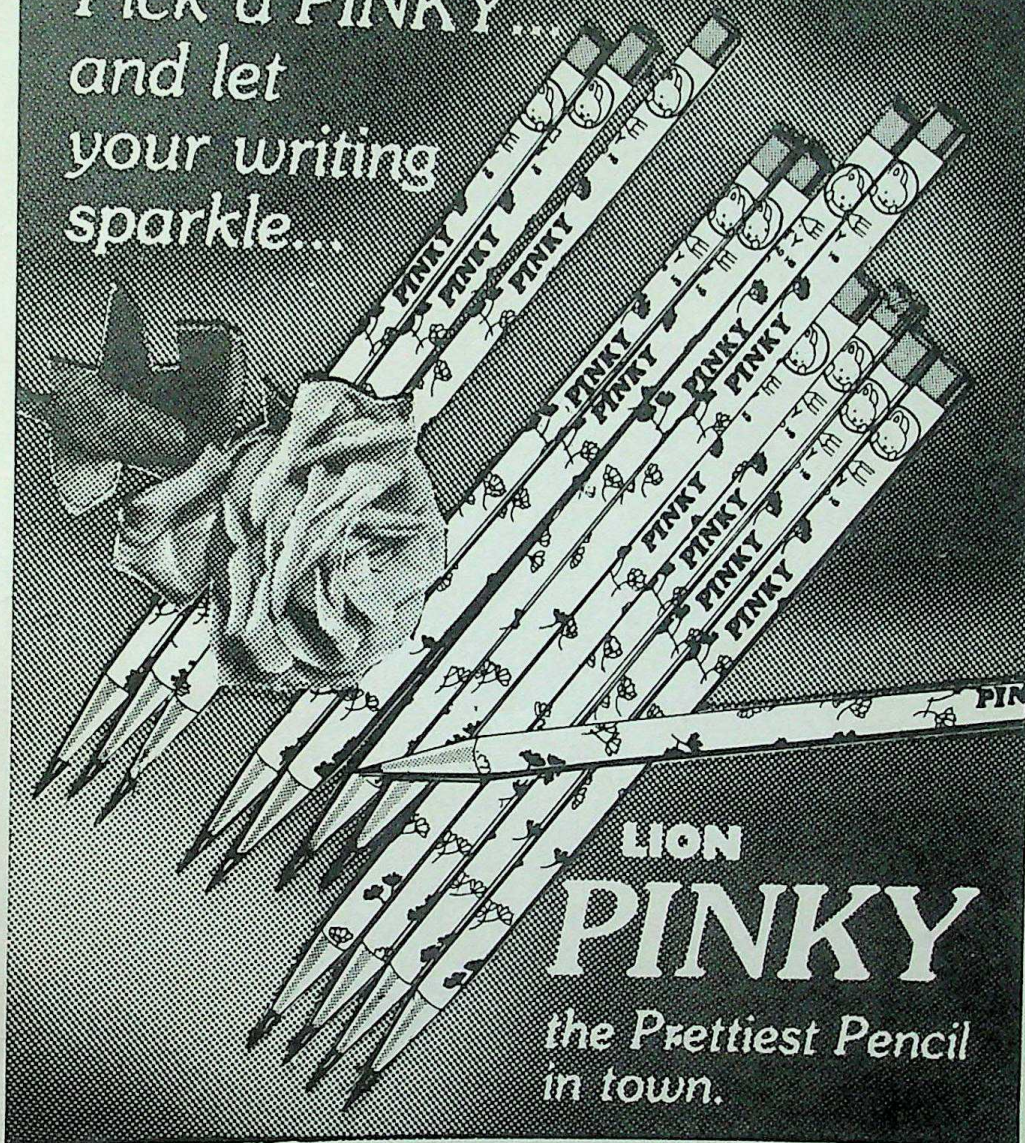


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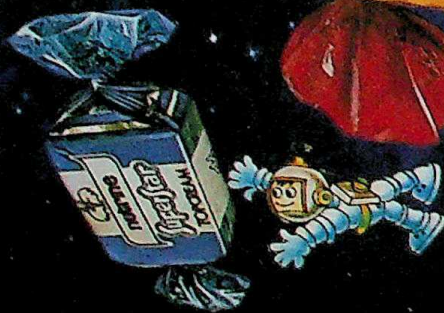
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